Winter 1972
Volume 18 no 1 (82)
75 p $2.00

SURVEY

a journal of East & West studies

My Testament

Nadezhda Mandelshtam

LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION

Edward J. Brown
Leopold Labedz
Juan López-Morillas
Branko Lenski
Max Hayward
Robert A. Maguire
Peter Demetz
Cyril Bryner

Europe and America

Andrew J. Pierre

Misbehavioural Sciences

Maurice Cranston

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Ilford House, 133 Oxford Street, London W1R 1TD (Tel. 01–734–0592)

Subscription Office

Oxford University Press, Subscription Department, Press Road, Neasden, London NW10 (Tel. 01–450–8080)

Subscription Rates

£3 or US $8.00. Student Rates £1·50 or US $4.00. Single copies 75p or US $2.00. Special arrangements for airmail.

Manuscripts

Articles should be submitted in duplicate to the editorial office. They should be typed in double-spacing and, preferably, conform to the house-style of *Survey*.

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An international journal for the study of China

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QUARTERLY CHRONICLE AND DOCUMENTATION

Editorial Office: 24 FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON W.1.

Subscription Agents:
RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS LTD., VICTORIA HALL,
EAST GREENWICH, LONDON SE10 0RF

Subscription Rates: £4 or U.S. $10.00 a year
For full-time students: £2 or U.S. $5.00 a year
Individual copies: £1 or U.S. $2.50

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My Testament*

Nadezhda Mandelshtam

'IT is time to consider', I often said to Mandelshtam, 'who will get it all . . . Shurik?' He replied: 'People will keep it safe. . . . Whoever keeps it safe will get it.' 'And if they don't keep it safe?' 'If they don't, it means that nobody needs it and it is worth nothing. . . .' The well-loved niece of O. M., Tatka, was still alive, but in the course of these talks, O. M. never even mentioned her name. For him poetry and the archives were not valuables which could be bequeathed, but rather notes in a bottle thrown into the ocean. They belonged to whoever picked them up on the beach, as he said in an early article 'On an Interlocutor'. The times we lived in contributed to this attitude: it was easier to perish for the sake of poetry than to get royalties for it. O. M. condemned his poetry and prose to 'wild' safe-keeping, but if one relied on this method only, the poetry would have survived in an incredibly distorted form. But by chance I was spared—we always thought we should perish together, and mastered the purely Soviet art of keeping dangerous manuscripts. This is not a simple matter. In those days people, in the grip of mad terror, cleaned out the drawers of their desks destroying everything: family archives, photographs of friends and acquaintances, letters, notebooks, diaries, any documents which came to hand, even Soviet newspapers and cuttings. In these actions madness went hand in hand with common sense. On the one hand the bureaucratic machine of destruction did not need any facts and arrests took place according to a mysterious bureaucratic capriciousness. A confession of crime, which was easily obtained at night in the office of the interrogator by the assembly belt or simplified interrogation, was sufficient for condemnation. In order to manufacture a 'group' case, the interrogator could tie into one knot people who were complete strangers, but we still preferred not to give the interrogators a list of our acquaintances, or their letters or notes, in order that they should not have a chance of using factual material. Even now, thinking of days gone by, or perhaps foreseeing misfortunes to come, Akhmatova's friends got a fright on hearing that letters from her readers and notebooks, in which, in the period of relaxation, she started to enter who was going to visit her and at what time, were sold to the (official) archives. For

* Testament of N. Ya. Mandelshtam, completing her memoirs widely circulated by *Samizdat* in Russia. We publish it by kind permission of YMCA Press (Paris). It is not included either in the first volume of Mrs. Mandelshtam's memoirs which was published under the title of *Hope against Hope* or in the second volume which is to be published by Collins-Harvill.

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instance, I am still unable to keep a book with the telephone numbers of my acquaintances, because I am still used to being wary of such 'documents'. . . . In our time, keeping of manuscripts had acquired a particular meaning—this act was psychologically near to self-immolation—everybody tears, burns and destroys papers, while somebody keeps, in spite of all this, a handful of human warmth. O. M. was right in refusing to nominate an heir and maintaining that the right of inheritance is given by the only sign of respect for poetry possible among us: to keep safe, to preserve, because people need it and it will continue to live. I succeeded in preserving some things from the archive and nearly all the poetry, because I was helped by various people and my brother, Evgenii Yakovlevich Khazin. Some of the original keepers perished in camps and whatever I gave them perished with them, others did not return from the war, but those who were left returned my papers to me, with the exception of Finkelshtein-Rudakova, who now trades in them. Among the keepers was Gorky's illegitimate and unacknowledged daughter, a woman with a stubborn and intelligent face, who bore an astonishing likeness to him. For many years 'The Fourth Prose' and some poetry were deposited in her keeping. This woman was not among the readers and lovers of poetry, but apparently she liked to maintain the old traditions of the Russian intelligentsia and the literature which was repudiated by her father. I knew O. M.'s prose and poetry by heart—it could happen that papers were lost while I survived—and copied his work continually (by hand of course). 'A Talk on Dante' was re-written to make tens of copies, but only three of them have survived until now.

NOW a new task confronts me. The old generation of keepers is gradually dying out and my days are numbered, while the aim is being pushed further away in time. Even the minute collection in 'Poet's Library', even that, it has not been possible to publish for 11 years (I write this at the end of December 1966). All originals are still preserved in the hands of other people. Mandelshtam believed in state archives, but not I. Already in the beginning of the twenties there was the 'Oldenburg case'. He accepted for safe-keeping into the archive of the Academy of Sciences documents unacceptable to the authorities, which were, in his opinion, of historical value. Furthermore, we are not guaranteed against a new round of 'cultural revolution' when the archives will be cleaned out again. And it is now already clear that I shall not live long enough to see these books published and that they have not become valueless biding their time in other people's table drawers. That is why I appeal to the Future, which will draw the appropriate conclusion, and implore the Future, even if it is far distant, to do my bidding. I have the right to express my will because my whole life was spent in safeguarding a handful of poetry and prose of a poet who has perished. This is not the vulgar right of a widow and an heiress,

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but the right of a comrade of dark days. The legal side of the affair is as follows: after the rehabilitation pertaining to the second case, I, like other widows of rehabilitated writers, automatically obtained the right of inheritance for a term of 15 years (up to 1972 according to our law). The whole legal procedure took place not at the Writers' Union, but simply before a notary. Therefore no obstacles were placed before me and everything happened as in the case of other people. The legal act certifying the right of inheritance lies in the table drawer, because I have obtained a domicile. For ten years before that I kept it in a suitcase. Theoretically I could refuse my consent to the publication of Mandelshtam's work—a positive act. I have no power to grant it. But firstly, nobody will take any notice of me, secondly, nobody publishes him anyway and only occasionally some naughty little magazine or paper will print a random publication from their 'wandering lists'. As Anna Andreyevna said, we live in 'pre-Gutenberg times' and 'wandering lists' of the necessary books circulate more actively than printed editions. If they are so kind, these little magazines send me a friendly brass farthing for this publication, and I am glad to get it because it represents the spirit of a new life. That is the limit of my rights of inheritance and, as I said before, nobody takes any notice of me. In this last act of volition, I act as if I had in my table not a useless scrap of legal paper, but a valuable document which recognised and confirmed my absolute right to this bitter inheritance.

Should anyone wish to dispute my moral and legal right to dispose of this inheritance, I will remind them of the following: when our monumental epoch issued an order for my arrest, took away my last piece of bread, dismissed me from work, mocked me and made me into a tramp, exiled me from Moscow, not only in 1938, but in 1958, no one cast any doubt on my full widow's rights and on the expediency of treating me in this way. I survived and preserved the remains of the archive against, and in spite of, Soviet literature, state and society, through an elementary oversight on their part. There is a remarkable law: the murderer always underestimates the strength of his victim. For him the person trampled underfoot and murdered is 'a handful of camp dust', a trembling shadow of Babi Yar. Who would believe that they can be resurrected and start to talk? When killing, every murderer mocks his victim and repeats 'Is this a man?' Whoever worships power imagines a proper man and a proper poet as a potential murderer. 'He will show us all.' Such an undervaluation of their tortured and suffering victims is inevitable and because of it I, and my handful of papers, were forgotten. And this escape, against and in spite of everything, gives me the right to dispose of my legally valid literary inheritance.

But—the legal right will come to an end in 1972, 15 years after 'the commencement of the right of inheritance', the term which was set by the state as the limit of its validity. They might as well have set any other figure, or denied this right altogether. The payment to the heirs

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of 50 per cent, rather than the full royalties, is just as arbitrary. Why 50 and not 75, or 20? However, I admit that the state has the right to treat as it wishes those whom it has created, called from non-existence, whose patron it had been, whom it caressed and entertained with fame and wealth. In other words, those whom it bought lock, stock and barrel. 15 years of inheritance, as far as our literature is concerned, is merely an additional favour of the state and also a concession to European tradition.

BUT I dispute this limitation to 15 years when applied to Mandelshtam. What did the state do for him to entitle it to take away first 50 and then all 100 per cent of his literary inheritance with the help of its writers' organizations, official commissions on inheritance and bureaucrats called chief, external and internal editors? Will they, shaven or moustached, sleek amateurs of posthumous publications, look through the handful of pages which I rescued and decide what is worth and what is not worth publishing, which pieces by the poet are 'up to the mark' and which should be returned to him for alteration? Perhaps even then they will look for 'progressiveness' from the standpoint dictated by the current moment and the prompting of the state? And later divide between themselves, the publishers and the state, the income—however derisory, even of two farthings—of this unlucky publication? Which percentage will be credited to the state and which to its vanguard—the writers' organizations? What for? By what right?

I dispute this right and ask the Future to grant me my last and only request. In order better to justify this request, which I hope will be granted by the state of the Future, whatever laws it lives under, I will enumerate in a word or two all that Mandelshtam received from the Past and Present state and what he owes it. The partial ban of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties: 'untopical', 'foreign to our spirit', 'our reader does not need this', a Ukrainian expression which made us laugh 'not wanted' (*ne treba*), the search for beggarly earnings, hack literary work, the search for 'patrons' in order to push something through into print. . . . Press comment: 'has stopped writing poetry', 'is doing translations', 're-hashes his own work', 'servile prose', etc. . . . After 1934 a complete ban, even his name is not mentioned in the press up to 1956, when it surfaces again with the adjective 'decadent'. Nearly 13 years have passed since O. M.'s death while his book is still 'being prepared for publication'. And his biography: exile into voluntary settlement in 1934—Chedyn and Voronezh, and in 1938—arrest, camp and a nameless grave, or rather a hole into which he was thrown with a tag around his leg. The destruction of manuscripts confiscated in house searches, broken negatives of his photographs, spoiled cylinders with the record of his voice. . . .

This maligned and forbidden name, this unpublished poetry, this writer's archive destroyed in the boilers of the Lubyanka—this is my

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literary heritage which, according to the law, should revert to the state in 1972. How dare it claim this heritage? I beg the Future to save me from these laws and this heir. It is not prison guards who should be heirs to a fettered prisoner, but those who were fettered with him to the same cart. Is the state not ashamed to confiscate those few prison verses from those who secretly, in order not to share the same fate, wept each night for the dead and kept his name in memory? What does it want with this decadent?

Let the state inherit from those who sold their soul: it never gave any summer cottages or honours for nothing; let them bring it its inheritance on a gold platter, if they wish. The poetry, however, bought with a life, must remain private, not state property. I appeal to the Future which is still far away, and beg it to defend the camp inmate who perished and to forbid the state to touch his heritage, whatever laws it might invoke. This weightless property must be safeguarded from the encroachment of the state should it demand it legally or illegally. I do not want to hear about laws which the state creates or destroys, fulfills, or breaks, but always according to the exact letter of the law and for its own need and advantage. I have been convinced of this, having spent my life in our most legal state.

Having come into conflict with this Assyrian monster, the state, in its purest form, I have been imbued for ever with a terror of it in all its manifestations. Therefore, whatever it be in that Future which I invoke, democratic or oligarchic, totalitarian or populist, living under the rule of law, or lawless, let it renounce its doubtful rights and leave this inheritance in the hands of private people.

It might, God forbid, give the income from this inheritance to its writers' organizations. Can one endure this: literature is so respected here that the possessor of poetic power is sent into a sanatorium from which he is fetched by the executors of the will of the state in a lorry, to be conveyed safely to the famous house on the Lubyanka and from there, in a goods waggon full to overflowing with the condemned, dragged right through the country to the far district on the edge of the ocean and thrown into a hole without a coffin. Later, 15 years not after death, but after rehabilitation, they take possession of his literary heritage and convert the income from it in favour of writers' organizations, so that they can send another writer to a sanatorium or to a House of Writers (House of Creativity). . . . Can you imagine this? The state must be prevented from securing this inheritance.

I REQUEST the Future to assign the perpetual right to this inheritance, that is while the books are published and the poetry is read, to the people whom I will name in a special document. Let there always be 11 of them, in memory of Mandelshtam's 11-line verse, and let the place of those who depart be taken by substitutes elected by those who remain.

I entrust to this commission of heirs the unconditional disposal of

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the remains of the archive, publishing of books, reprinting of poetry, publication of unpublished material. But I beg this commission to protect this heritage from the state and to give in neither to its intimidation nor to its flattery. I have lived my life during a time when it was demanded from each of us that everything we did should be 'useful to the state'. I beg the members of this commission never to forget that within us, within the people, there is an overriding value, that we are not servants of the state, but the state is our servant, that poetry is addressed to people, to their living soul, and is no concern of the state except when the poet, defending his people or his art, himself addresses to the state an appeal or a reproach, as sometimes happens during enemy invasion. Freedom of thought, freedom of art, freedom of speech—these are sacred ideas as incontrovertible as the ideas of good and evil, as freedom of faith and worship. If a poet lives like everybody else, thinks, suffers, enjoys himself, talks with people and feels that his fate is inseparable from the fate of all people—who would dare to demand that his poetry should be 'useful to the state'? Why should the state declare itself the heir of a free man; and, by the way, what use is it to the state? All the more if the memory of this man lives in people's hearts and the state does everything to expunge it.

That is why I beg the members of the commission, that is, those to whom I bequeath Mandelshtam's inheritance, to do everything possible to preserve the memory of the dead man—for his satisfaction and theirs. Should my inheritance bring in any money, the commission should itself decide what to do with it. Fritter it away, or give it to people, or spend it for their own pleasure. But it should not set up any literary funds or deposits but rather try to spend this money in a simpler and more humane way, in memory of a man who loved life so much and was not allowed to live it. The state and its bureaucratic literature must on no account receive any of it. Please also remember that the murdered man is always stronger than the murderer, and a simple man is greater than the man who wishes to subjugate him.

Such is my wish, and I hope that the Future to which I appeal will respect it, if only because I gave my life to safeguarding the work and the memory of the dead man.

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Literature and Revolution

In December 1971 an international conference was convened at Stanford University to discuss 'Literature and Politics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe'. It was sponsored by the Stanford Center for Russian and East European Studies headed by Professor Ivo Lederer and organized by Professor Edward J. Brown of the Slavic Department of Stanford University. The current issue of SURVEY *is based on this symposium. For reasons of space we were unable to publish all the papers presented at the conference in this issue. They may eventually appear in a book which is planned for publication at a later date, in which the current* SURVEY *symposium will be presented in an expanded form. The articles published below have been revised and in some cases extended by the authors. Apart from the authors and those already mentioned, the participants included Professors Alexander Dallin (Stanford University), Milorad Drachkovitch (Hoover Institution), Vera Dunham (Wayne State University), Terence Emmons (Stanford University), Donald Fanger (Harvard University), Kathryn Feuer (University of Toronto), George Gibian (Cornell University), Ante Kadic (Indiana University), Simon Karlinsky (University of California at Berkeley), Herbert Lindenberger (Stanford University), Hugh McLean (University of California at Berkeley), Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr. (Columbia University), Czeslaw Milosz (University of California at Berkeley), Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (Stanford University), Robert Rosenzweig (Stanford University), Josef Skvorecky (University of Toronto), Lawrence Stahlberger (Stanford University), Gleb Struve (University of California at Berkeley), Jan F. Triska (Stanford University), Joseph A. Van Campen (Stanford University), Andrzej Wirth (Lehman College) and Bertram D. Wolfe (Hoover Institution). The conference was the first symposium organized by Stanford University in co-operation with* SURVEY. *Other conferences on the same basis are planned for the future.*

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Literature and Revolution

The Destiny of Writers in Revolutionary Movements

Leopold Labedz

'THE Great October Socialist Revolution had a decisive influence on world literature . . .'—thus begins an authoritative book on the subject published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences.[1] The claim echoes Trotsky's prophecy in his *Literature and Revolution*: 'The art of this epoch will be entirely under the influence of revolution.' The year was 1924. Trotsky characterized revolutionary art as having 'a limitless faith in the future' and ended his book predicting that 'man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler. . . . The average human type will rise to the height of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge, new peaks will rise.'

Since this was written there have been rather ample opportunities to observe the influence of revolution on art and literature. We are still some way to Trotsky's ridge: 'the average human type' in post-revolutionary society has not yet reached the height of an Aristotle or a Goethe, not even the average member of Mr Brezhnev's Politbureau. But it is already possible to see the pattern in the encounter of literature and revolution. It emerges from the comparison of their confrontation in different countries and provides an insight into the nature of our epoch. Or perhaps even into the question of the human condition itself.

What is the basis of the revolutionary appeal to writers? What is their fate after the revolution? What happens to their hopes and fears? How does the revolutionary experience affect their attitudes? What happens to literature as a result? And finally, how does the revolutionary idea itself change? These are the questions to be studied in the comparative context of various revolutions if the cultural implications of contemporary revolutionary longings are to be seen in historical perspective and their probable outcome on future occasions assessed.

THE involvement of writers in revolutionary movements is part of a wider problem of the intellectual in politics. Until modern times an intellectual could have a direct effect on it only as an adviser to the prince, and how frustrating that was Aristotle and Ibn Khaldun, Macchiavelli

[1] A. I. Puzikov, V. P. Shcherbina, Ya. E. Elsberg, *Velikii Oktyabr i Mirovaya Literatura* (Moscow, 1967).

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and Sir Thomas More can testify! Indeed, it inspired the latter to write his *Utopia.* As he confessed in his letter to Erasmus, in his dreams of an ideal society he imagined himself ' in the part of a sovereign of Utopia '.[2] Thus at the very beginning of modern times, when, emerging from the religious ages, the ancient dream of paradise is brought to earth,[3] one sees the intellectual inspiration of the utopian tradition in the twin sources of schematic idealism and political frustration (John Milton, who was involved in a revolution, wrote in *Paradise Lost* that it is ' better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven '). It was, however, only the emergence of the phenomenon of the intelligentsia which brought utopian thought and the revolutionary idea together. The old mythological and religious ideas—the myth of redemption, millenarianism and chiliasm—were now transformed into a secular gnosis: the idea of a perfect society through violent change. When the gate to the now secularized Heavenly City is forced, history will begin anew through the total reconstruction of social relations on just and rational lines. The persistence of the notions of an ideal enclave and of salvation in all their historical metamorphoses is so striking that it clearly corresponds to enduring human psychological traits and not just to changing social needs. They also, of course, depend on historical conditions and on the existence of social categories to which they have a special appeal and which act as vehicles for their dissemination. Intelligentsia is such a category. Its character and evolution were different in different countries and therefore it means different things in different contexts. But despite the difficulties with its definition, it is one of the concepts [4]—like populism or romanticism—which one cannot do without.

The internal differentiation of the intelligentsia at various times and places had a marked influence on the attitude of writers towards the revolutionary idea. The classical case is, of course, that of the Russian intelligentsia, which evolved from the stage when it was dominated by the populist (or even nihilist) toughmindedness of the *raznochintsy* to the post-*Vekhi* period of professionalization and the shift from social and political to cultural and aesthetic interests of the literary Silver Age before the first world war. The writers who were still committed to the revolutionary idea—and they were a minority—reflected a split among the intelligentsia. But even among them, the author of the symbolic *Burevestnik,* the stormy petrel of the revolution, Maxim Gorky, was responding to the shift in the mood of the intelligentsia. When the long-awaited revolution finally came, this life-long friend of Lenin wrote his

2 Quoted by Melvin J. Lasky in ' Utopia and Revolution ', an unpublished manuscript.

3 The word ' paradise ' derives from the Old Persian *pairidaera,* denoting an enclosed park or orchard. Cf. John Armstrong, *The Paradise Myth* (London, 1969); also Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel, ' Sketch for a Natural History of Paradise ', in *Daedalus* (Winter 1972), pp. 83–128.

4 It was first used in Russia in the 1860s and for a long time was considered a *sui generis* Russian phenomenon; later it was applied to other undeveloped countries; nowadays it is applied also to industrial and ' post-industrial ' countries.

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Untimely Thoughts, which were so critical of Bolshevik revolutionary practice of terror and censorship.

The social precursors of the literary and professional intelligentsia had already appeared in politics before the French Revolution as the *Philosophes* and the Physiocrats. They were reformists, not revolutionaries. It was Rousseau with his abstract idea of absolute popular sovereignty (including the right to regicide) who was the literary precursor of the revolution. He is the archetype of what has today become the stereotype of the 'alienated intellectual'. His revolutionary fantasies strongly resemble the ideological rationalizations of later revolutionary longings, rationalizations which were formulated by and which appealed to subsequent generations of political *literati* (who were of course using the idiom appropriate to their age and its *Zeitgeist*). There is already in Rousseau the idea of alienation malevolently imposed by contemporary society: lost happiness and lost virtue result from *l'homme naturel* becoming *l'homme civil*. Both Stirner and Marcuse are of course direct descendants of Rousseau. There is the elitist concept of the enlightened revolutionary vanguard which presaged all the populist and Marxist dreams of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: 'How can a blind multitude, which often does not know what it wills, because it rarely knows what is good for it, carry out for itself as great and difficult an enterprise as a system of legislature?' This can be done only by a Legislator, 'the engineer who makes the machine'. One can already see here Robespierre waiting in the wings to enthrone the Goddess of Reason as a Supreme Being in Notre Dame, and to rule by terror to force people to be free. Even the geographical projection of Utopia already exists in Rousseau (not yet in Sir Thomas More); *le noble sauvage* really exists and, although the Encyclopedists were sceptical about utopian writings, the contemporary 'intelligentsia' was looking for him in Bougainville and other exotic places with the same positivistic curiosity as our contemporary true believers making pilgrimages to their own Utopian locations: Moscow, Peking, or Havana.

The *Philosophes* of the Enlightenment with their liberal ideas of education and their moderate, if naive, notions of reason in politics were not yet true devotees of the revolution. They were all dead by the time it came (with the exception of Condorcet), but like Condorcet, they would probably have fallen victims of the Terror if they had still been alive. They had been too influenced by Locke, by the example of British constitutionalism and by Voltairean scepticism to accept Rousseau in practice, when they had not accepted him in theory. And yet as Coleridge had noticed, there was 'a natural affinity' between their philosophy and despotism 'notwithstanding their proud pretensions as the emancipators of the human race'. By the time the revolution came (and the Goncourts wrote that it began in the *salons* attended by the *Philosophes*), it was a different part of the intelligentsia which played the predominant role in it: the provincial lawyers, like Robespierre, the

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self-educated adventurers, like Marat, the clerks, the *roturiers*. . . . And the stage was set for the first enactment of this tragi-comedy of errors which is periodically provided by the confrontation between the theories of political *littérateurs* and revolutionary practice. The writers, though not always literature, are its frequent victims. Those among them who embraced the revolutionary myth of salvation often suffered the pangs of disillusion, which does not preclude subsequent generations of literary intelligentsia from being again attracted by the revolutionary idea, as moths are attracted by flame. It is true that more recently many such writers have preferred to worship this idea at a safe distance, but it is a fact attested by history that like the rest of humanity, writers are not necessarily discouraged by unrequited love, and like the rest of humanity they are moved by passion and myth rather than by reason and historical experience.

When Condorcet was in hiding during the Terror, he wrote his celebrated *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Spirit* in which he asserted (like Trotsky) that 'the perfectibility of man is absolutely infinite', it has no limits, and 'the present state of knowledge assures us that the new era will be happy'. Condorcet wrote these words in March 1794. Exactly three weeks later he was arrested and took poison to avoid the guillotine. Trotsky had 15 years to live before the ice-pick of Stalin's assassin reached his brain, confirming his 1924 prediction in *Literature and Revolution* that 'life in the future will not be monotonous', rather than his prophecy there about the perfectibility of man.

For *belles-lettres* the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era were barren. Trotsky explained this in *Literature and Revolution* as being due to the fact that Frenchmen were busy making the revolution, which is a somewhat lame explanation. What happened was that many writers went into exile and not a few of those who remained feared for their lives. Not all of them could say like Sièyes, 'J'ai vécu', when it was over. During the Terror, the poet Camille Desmoulins, Robespierre's friend, was executed,[5] and so was another poet, the most notable of his generation, André Chénier. The literary historian, P. E. Charvet, remarks that 'emigration as an inevitable concomitant of the revolution was to have important and valuable consequences for French literature'.[6] During the Napoleonic era *l'esprit Voltairien* and the liberal spirit of Montesquieu vegetated in the *Institut*, subject to the despotic police controls exercised by Fouché on behalf of the Emperor who introduced stringent censorship and who contemptuously called the liberal intellectuals, *metaphysiciens nebuleux* or *idéologues*. Madame de Staël was banned from Paris, her *De l'Allemagne* was prevented by the censor from appearing, she was placed

[5] Robespierre, who as a young lawyer denounced capital punishment, refused a plea for mercy from Camille Desmoulins' friends. He was by that time not far away from his own execution.

[6] *A Literary History of France* (London, 1967), Vol. IV, p. 32.

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under police supervision, and eventually escaped abroad. Benjamin Constant was in constant opposition to Napoleon and moved to Germany during the last phase of his reign. He published his masterpiece, *Adolphe*, only in 1819, although he had written it in 1806. It was only after the fall of Napoleon that French literature flourished again, with Chateaubriand and Hugo, Lamartine and Vigny, Stendhal and Mérimée.

The French Revolution had a powerful effect on writers abroad. It aroused at first a considerable sympathy among them, but later their enthusiasm waned and in many cases turned into positive disillusion. The revolution was seen as the champion of the suffering and the weak, of the poor and the oppressed, providing new hope for the downtrodden and for the whole of humanity. It was to introduce the rule of reason and equality. 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very Heaven!' Wordsworth explained what made him so enthusiastic:

> The attraction of a country in romance!
> Where Reason seemed the most to assert her rights . . .

But soon came the 'disappointment sore' when Wordsworth discovered that revolutionaries became 'oppressors in their turn', a familiar reflection which will echo down the ages with every subsequent 'God that failed'. Coleridge, who also originally embraced the revolutionary idea, wrote in bitter disillusion:

> Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
> They burst their manacles and wear the name
> of Freedom graven on a heavier chain!

Goethe, Kant, Beethoven, all were disappointed. Goya summed it up: 'The dream of Reason produces monsters.' The observation became a *leitmotif* with disillusioned writers. Hölderlin wrote that 'What has always made the state a hell on earth has been precisely that man has tried to make it his heaven'. Later on Dostoyevsky, having abandoned his youthful revolutionary beliefs, in his reaction against the revolutionary nihilism of *Nechaevshchina*, echoed the theme: 'The policy which starts with unlimited liberty ends with unlimited despotism.' The sentiment has been expressed again and again by many writers down to our own days. But the thought is not original. Pascal had already said: 'Man is neither angel nor brute and the unfortunate thing is that he who would act the angel acts the brute.'

In France after the Restoration literature reflected a disappointment with the world, a disenchantment with the revolutionary idea. The early phase of French romanticism was a delayed reaction against the Enlightenment's belief in Reason and in the infinite perfectibility of man. With the passage of time the memory of the September Massacres, the Terror, the transformation of pure Reason into the fanaticism of revolutionary practical reason, and the aggressive militarism of the Napoleonic era faded, and no longer inhibited the imagination of writers as it had done earlier. In the 1830s romanticism acquires a revolutionary connotation

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in France and elsewhere. In France the revolutionary myth thrives on the identification of patriotism with revolution. It is the fiery rhetoric of Saint-Just and Danton, the pathos of the revolution as a theatre, Valmy and the glories of French arms under the Emperor that appeal to the defeated nation and its writers. The son of a Napoleonic general, Victor Hugo, reflects quite well this evolution. The scepticism of de Tocqueville was to be appreciated only in the future. He was the first thinker who understood that a revolutionary movement transforms religious belief into a political belief but retains the basic characteristics of the former, that it shares with religious movements a dogmatic fanaticism although its faith is not transcendent. But in the 1840s the hope and the despair again become absolute and take an exclusively political form. Revolutionary secret societies deriving from Babeuf's and Buonarotti's *Conspiracy of the Equals* develop in a society which has a large reservoir of marginal men, of the ambitious but frustrated would-be intellectuals, of Julien Sorels and Rastignacs who have little chance 'to take possession of Paris'. The revolutionary idea is being embraced again; Marx and Engels study 'the French revolutionary tradition'.

After the failure of the last of *Les Trois Glorieuses* the pendulum swings again. Baudelaire regrets his revolutionary 'intoxication' and so does Flaubert, whose *Éducation Sentimentale* was read with special pleasure by the middle-aged during the *événements* of May 1968. After the heady 'June Days' of 1848 and the *coup d'état* of 1851 French writers moved away from the revolutionary 'intoxication'. For Baudelaire the vision of a rational Utopia is an inverted reflection of the terrestrial paradise; the Utopians, 'the entrepreneurs of public happiness', are frauds who engage in the manipulation of man in the name of fiction. In his *Le Poème du Haschisch* Baudelaire ironically remarks that 'Jean-Jacques (Rousseau) had drugged himself without hashish.'

In the historical vicissitudes of the romance between literature and revolution in France the most illustrious among its contemporary *amoureux*, Jean-Paul Sartre, strikes at both Baudelaire and Flaubert with particular passion. In his books on them he dismisses Baudelaire as a mere rebel, who unlike the real revolutionary does not want to change the world, and Flaubert as a bourgeois intellectual who 'despite his efforts to view the world as an aristocrat' retains 'a bourgeois view of the bourgeoisie'. In Sartre revolutionary optimism is now slightly dimmed, but it still shines forth:

> Will the human condition be cleansed of exploitation, alienation, and all that is disgusting in this society? I'm not so sure. . . . Historians claim revolutionaries never know where or when to stop. But it is the contrary. They always do stop, so that the next generation of revolutionaries has felt obliged to go after the previous generation. . . . Perhaps it would be better if for once a revolutionary movement was ready and willing to go all the way.[7]

[7] *The New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 1971.

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Nothing can express more neatly the revolutionary commitment to Utopia after so many disappointments: he, Sartre, is not certain that it can be achieved in the future, but blames previous revolutionaries for having failed to achieve it in the past by not going 'all the way' (whatever that can mean in the context of Sartre's expressed preference for 'a revolution without terror').

With the French Revolution it was still possible to use the argument of its Scottish fellow-traveller (who later became disillusioned), John Mackintosh, who was impressed in 1791 by 'its unexampled mildness and the small number of individuals crushed in the fall of so vast a pile.' With the Russian Revolution it is not possible to use such arguments (the number of victims of the French Terror was 20 thousand, of the Soviet Great Terror—20 million), so the rationalization moved to the more callous: 'You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs', but the end—Utopia, and the means—Revolution, remained the guiding stars of the intellectuals and writers looking for historical shortcuts and total solutions.

OUR own revolutionary epoch provides striking illustrations of the relationship between literature and revolution and of the destinies of writers caught in between. On the most general plane there is an ironical contrast between the mortality rates of pro-revolutionary artists and writers under revolutionary and non-revolutionary regimes. Paradoxically, one can almost say that for them a natural death is natural only in the non-revolutionary regimes. If this is somewhat exaggerated it is certainly wholly true that as a rule they, and other writers, enjoy far greater creative freedom in pre-revolutionary than in post-revolutionary societies. The point is rather obvious; the cases of the last two Nobel Prize winners for literature, Solzhenitsyn and Neruda, are symbolic in this respect. Or one can mention Brecht. Or Picasso who joined the French Communist Party in 1945 but whose 'formalist' paintings still cannot be seen in the Soviet Union.[8] And there is of course a legion of other examples.

It is therefore not surprising that many writers who fervently believed that on their Moscow pilgrimages they 'saw the future and it works' were not inclined to settle in their dreamland when they were faced with the choice.

When Lion Feuchtwanger visited Moscow in 1937, he discovered there 'genuine freedom' (and wrote a book justifying the Moscow Trials),[9] but he preferred to live his refugee life under 'formal' bourgeois

[8] When Mr. Brezhnev visited the Louvre, where Picasso's paintings were displayed to honour his 90th anniversary, he was asked to comment on them. His comment on Picasso should be recorded for posterity: 'He had a good idea to use a dove as a symbol of peace.' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1971.)

[9] He wrote the following about 'confessions': 'If that was lying or prearranged, then I don't know what truth is.' Quoted in John Caute, *Fellow Travellers* (an unpublished MS), from which some of the subsequent quotations are taken.

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freedom, first in France, then in America. So did Heinrich Mann who lived in the USA and who died at the very moment when, after years of hesitation, he had decided to go to the DDR. Brecht did go there, but he retained his Austrian passport and his Swiss bank account.

It is far easier for writers to preserve their revolutionary attachment and faith in Utopia if they are not compelled to live with it. Not surprisingly, the revolutionary experience of our epoch elicited contrasting reactions from inside and from outside. The number and the quality of the writers who either temporarily or permanently embraced the revolutionary idea and identified it with the Soviet cause is astonishing. It includes Anatole France, George Bernard Shaw, Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, André Malraux, Julien Benda, Jean Guehenno, Paul Nizan, André Gide, Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Sean O'Casey, Panait Istrati, Martin Andersen Nexö, Ludwig Renn, Johannes Becher, Theodor Plievier, Halldor Laxness, Ignazio Silone, Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini, Vasco Pratolini, Carlo Levi, John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, E. E. Cummings, Richard Wright, W. H. Auden, and many, many others.

Many of them have given up their faith, others have undergone considerable evolution. Each of them of course presents an individual case, but all of them at one time or another embraced the revolutionary myth, whatever the differences in their background and personality. Like their predecessors at the time of the French Revolution, they hailed the Russian Revolution as a lodestar of freedom and justice.

From the beginning they displayed not just political naïveté in their pilgrimages to the revolutionary Mecca, but also a readiness to condone political violence. The venerable sceptic, Anatole France, declared that 'if one wishes to see an era of justice established, one must be resigned to what may come to pass in its accomplishment—to injustice, cruelties, blood'. He had no idea of what the scale of such phenomena might be in the twentieth century (despite Party disapproval, he defended the Russian Social Revolutionaries who were tried in Moscow in 1922).

Later on, a pattern gradually emerged which combined a selective moral indignation with the acceptance of terror and despotism. Its premises were expressed by Brecht's *Die Massnahme*, in which he put the Party above morality,[10] by Auden in his poem *Spain*, where he proclaimed 'the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder', and by Merleau-Ponty providing in *Humanisme et Terreur* a perverse 'dialectical' justification for Stalin's *univers concentrationnaire*.

The obtuseness of some contemporary comments on the Stalin era defies comprehension. And they were being made not only by such asinine fellow-travellers as Hewlett Johnson, Anna Louise Strong, or the

10 Brecht wrote there that the fighter for communism must be able 'to speak the truth and not to speak the truth'. The scene of confession of the comrade about to be liquidated by the Party anticipated the Moscow Trials and provided their rationale in advance. A far less casuistic discussion on the subject was conducted by the Berlin Academy of Sciences and Literature in 1780. Cf. *Est-il utile de tromper le peuple?*, Ed. Werner Kraus, Akademie Verlag (Berlin, 1966).

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Webbs, but by literary figures of great standing. Romain Rolland felt that Stalin provided the best guarantee that *les droits de l'esprit* would be defended, George Bernard Shaw commended him as a 'good listener', Heinrich Mann argued that Stalin would rather renounce the title of Marshal than that of intellectual, Feuchtwanger wrote that 'it is irksome to Stalin to be idolized as he is . . .'

At the time of the Great Purge, when Akhmatova wrote her lines in *Requiem*:

Eta zhenshchina bolna	[*This woman is sick to her marrow-bone,*
Eta zhenshchina odna	*This woman is utterly alone,*
Muzh v mogile, syn v tyurmiye.	*With husband dead, with son away*
Pomolites obo mnye	*In jail. Pray for me. Pray.*]

(Translated by Stanley Kunitz.)

Aragon wrote about the accused in the Moscow Trials that 'to claim innocence for these men is to adopt the Hitlerian thesis on all points'.[11] When David Rousset wanted to reveal the facts about Stalin's slave camps, Sartre objected and wrote that the 'workers of Billancourt must not be deprived of their hopes'.

WHAT happened to the hopes of the Russian writers?

In his revolutionary 'classic', *Mother*, Gorky predicted that after the revolution 'Russia will be the most brilliant democracy in the world'. When the revolution did come, he was not so sure. Among the writers who emigrated were Bunin, Berdyaev, Andreev, Merezhkovsky, Zinaida Hippius, Remizov, Balmont, Khodasevich. Also Alexei Tolstoy, Tsvetaeva, Ehrenburg, and Prince Mirsky—all of whom later returned. But retrospectively the twenties look like a golden age of Soviet literature. The yoke of 'socialist realism' had not yet been imposed, there was a spiritual breathing space for writers under NEP, the struggle of literary tendencies was to some extent permitted. Artists and writers of the *avant-garde* could still cherish some illusions about its alliance with the political 'vanguard'. But the Party was growing increasingly monolithic and it was only a question of time before literature was to be *gleichgeschaltet* too. Zamyatin, who anticipated Stalin in the figure of the Benefactor in his novel, *We*, also anticipated the effects of such *Gleichschaltung* when he said that unless Russian writers were permitted to write without the shackles of a dogma, 'our literature will have only one future: its past'. And that is indeed what happened. Mandelshtam sensed it early enough when he wrote in 1923 the poem 'My age, the beast . . .'.

In 1930 Roman Jakobson wrote an article: 'The Generation That

11 Nadezhda Mandelshtam wrote in her memoirs, *Hope against Hope*: 'When I see books by the Aragons of this world, who are so keen to induce their fellow countrymen to live as we do, I feel I have a duty to tell about my own experience.'

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Squandered its Poets' in which he described the fate of four Russian poets who accepted the revolution and one who rejected it. He referred to the 'execution of Gumilyov, prolonged spiritual agony, unbearable physical treatment, the demise of Blok, cruel privations and the death of Khlebnikov, the premeditated suicides of Esenin and Mayakovsky'. What was to follow, however, made it quite clear that it was not a 'generation' which squandered its poets and writers.

At the First Soviet Writers' Congress, attended by a galaxy of Western literary fellow-travelling stars such as Gide and Malraux, Zhdanov boasted about the optimism of Soviet literature: 'Our literature is permeated with enthusiasm and heroism'. The re-converted Gorky, by then the official Grand Old Man of Soviet literature, proclaimed the obligatory character of 'socialist realism'. He described Dostoyevsky as 'a renegade who never understood the workings of the human mind', and declared that 'the real literature, the real truth lay among the folk heroes, those ancient and ever-present heroes of the labouring classes—Prometheus, Svyatagor, Ivan the Simple, Petrushka, and finally Lenin'. Malraux hailed the construction of the White Sea canal (built with slave labour) and accepted 'socialist realism' as a 'valuable' method, only to proclaim his particular brand of heroic myth: 'I feel that, just as Nietzsche took what was then known as the brute attitude and elevated it into a Zarathustra, so we should set up once again, in a realm beyond all ridiculous sentimentality, those values that bring men together and restore a meaning to the idea of manly brotherhood'. It was a fittingly incongruous note on an occasion which opened the surrealist era in Soviet life and literature. In two years' time Gorky was dead, allegedly as a result of the combined efforts of his doctors who, in order to wreck Soviet literature and revolution, sabotaged his health. A year later, Gide, who in 1932 wrote that his 'conversion has a religious character' and expressed his conviction that 'the Soviet Union points the way to redemption', declared that 'one must see things as they are, not as one pictures them to oneself in a wishful dream', and concluded that 'the Soviet Union has disappointed our fondest hopes'.[12] This was to be the *leitmotif* of the whole generation of Western writers who had enthusiastically adopted the revolutionary idea and became disillusioned with the Russian Revolution, as their ancestors had become disenchanted with the French Revolution. Except in this respect, there was little parallelism between the two revolutions, but the parallel between them became an obsession with the Russian revolutionary movement and, however illusory, played a part in shaping the attitudes and actions of those involved in it.

The squandering of poets and writers continued, only in a greatly

12 In 1934 Samuel Putnam wrote in the then communist *Partisan Review* (Vol. 1, No. 5, p. 36) that 'in finding communism André Gide has found that youth which all his life he has sought'. On Gide's death in 1951, the communist *l'Humanité* commented that 'a corpse has died'.

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intensified form, under *Yezhovshchina* and *Beriovshchina.* Solzhenitsyn summed it up in his *Open Letter* to the Fourth Soviet Writers' Congress:

> Many writers have been subjected during their lifetime to abuse and slander in the press and from rostrums without being afforded the physical possibility of replying. More than that, they have been exposed to violence and personal persecution (Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Alexander Grin, Vassily Grossman). . . . The leadership of the [Writers'] Union cravenly abandoned to their distress those for whom persecution ended in exile, labour camps, and death (Pavel Vasiliev, Mandelshtam, Artem Vesely, Pilnyak, Babel, Tabidze, Zabolotsky, and others). The list must be cut off at ' and others '. We learned after the 20th Party Congress that there were more than 600 writers whom the Union had obediently handed over to their fate in prisons and camps. However, the roll is even longer. . . .

And the list continues to this day, although since Stalin's death the treatment of artists and writers is less harsh: Brodsky, Sinyavsky and Daniel, Bukovsky, ' and others '. Solzhenitsyn himself is, needless to say, the most famous example.

What were the conclusions about the confrontation of literature and revolution in the Soviet Union drawn by those writers who wanted to bear witness to the epoch?

Pasternak, Sinyavsky, Solzhenitsyn, and Nadezhda Mandelshtam are quite explicit about it. They represent a contemporary religious revival in Russia, but their ethical philosophy and historical reflections probably provide a common denominator for many others who do not necessarily share their personal faith.

In *Doctor Zhivago* Pasternak is ambiguous about the revolution itself, but quite unambiguous about its later manifestations:

> Reshaping life! People who can say that may have lived through a lot, but have never understood a thing about life . . . they look on it as a lump of coarse raw material that needs to be processed by them. . . . But life is never a material, a substance . . . life is the principle of self-renewal . . . it is infinitely beyond your or my obtuse theories. . . .
>
> Marxism is too uncertain of its ground to be a science. Sciences are more balanced, more objective. I don't know a movement more self-centred and further removed from the facts than Marxism. Everyone is only worried about proving himself in practical matters, and as for the men in power, they are so anxious to establish the myth of their infallibility that they do their utmost to ignore the truth.

On another occasion Pasternak added the ironic remark:

> They really ask for very little, really for only one thing: to hate what one loves and love what one detests. And that is the most difficult thing of all.

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In his essay on socialist realism, Sinyavsky made explicit the connection between such compulsion (of which socialist realism was made an instrument in literature) and the utopian teleology of the revolution, what he calls ' the Purpose ':

> So that prisons should vanish forever, we build new prisons. So that all frontiers should fall, we surround ourselves with a Chinese Wall. So that work should become a rest and a pleasure, we introduced forced labour. So that not one drop of blood be shed any more, we killed and killed and killed.

In his latest novel, *August 1914*, Solzhenitsyn expresses some critical thoughts about the Russian radical intelligentsia. Its representative, a young populist, Sonya, is criticized by her father for adopting revolutionary shibboleths. Quoting Gorky's *Burevestnik*, he characterizes the call to revolution there as ' irresponsible '. He advocates political moderation and solid fundamental work by technical specialists to overcome Russia's industrial backwardness:

> A reasonable man cannot be for revolution, because revolution signifies a prolonged and mindless destruction. First of all, revolution, any revolution, does not renew the country, but tears it up for a very long time. And the more bloody, the more protracted it is, the more the country has to pay for it, the more likely it is to be called GREAT.

In her *Hope against Hope*, Nadezhda Mandelshtam explains the lack of resistance to the prolonged post-revolutionary horrors by the hold which the revolutionary myth had on the radical intelligentsia:

> The decisive part in the subjugation of the intelligentsia was played not by terror and bribery (though, God knows, there was enough of both), but by the word ' Revolution ' which none of them could bear to give up. It is a word to which whole nations have succumbed, and its force was such that one wonders why our rulers still needed prisons and capital punishment.

This is the crux of the matter, as the legitimacy of the regime is based on the acceptance, even if only tacit, of revolution as the road to the communist Utopia. Its erosion would undermine the legitimacy of the Soviet regime. The Party is therefore extremely sensitive on this point (and always has been). It is, of course, based upon Marxist *Gesetzmässigkeit*, a *zakonomernost* of history which positively guarantees the consummation of the belief, the attainment of ' the Purpose '. This is the inner core of legitimacy underlying the ideological control-mechanisms, including the doctrine of socialist realism in literature. Anything that puts into question the validity of Marxist ' laws of history ' challenges the dogma of not only socialist realism, but also of the revolutionary myth (with its concomitant Utopian perspective) and *ipso facto* contributes to the erosion of the regime's legitimacy which requires at least a lip-service to the historical certainties of Soviet ideology.

Since Khrushchev's ' secret speech ' a slow drift away from such

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prescribed certainties can be detected. It was reflected in literature where the hard core of communist ideology has been directly and explicitly challenged by the four writers quoted above. Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn in particular have made a frontal attack on the Marxist view of history. Pasternak dismisses it in *Doctor Zhivago* as 'a comical survival of the past' not to be taken seriously, and Solzhenitsyn in *August 1914* makes one of its heroes say that 'history is not ruled by reason', but is 'irrational'.

ONE of the persistent themes which constantly appears in the encounter between literature and revolution is the clash between literary sensibility and political controls, between the writers and the revolutionary rulers. It has been illustrated again and again, but the case of China is in some ways the most striking. In China both modern literature and the revolutionary idea were Western imports. The Chinese intelligentsia was also in a sense a product of Western cultural influence. It began to emerge after the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 and the resulting disappearance of the Chinese scholar-official. Nowhere else was the relation between modern literature and revolution so intimate at the beginning, and nowhere else has the divorce between them been more drastic.

Modern Chinese literature begins with the advocacy by Dr Hu Shih of the use of the vernacular in place of classical Chinese as the medium of literary expression. His article proposing this, written when he was a post-graduate student at Columbia University and published in the literary journal of Peking University, *New Youth*, was a signal for the original Chinese Cultural Revolution (usually called Literary Renaissance) in 1917. The same Peking University where students enthusiastically welcomed the idea was soon to become the hotbed of the May Fourth Movement and a recruiting ground for the emerging communist movement. The same kind of motives had originally moved them to break with the past. First, the felt need to abandon a moribund but sacrosanct literary tradition which had become esoteric and *précieuse* and had degenerated into a system of obscure allusions and pedantic stereotypes. The learned but barren language of outworn clichés was to be replaced by the living language of the vernacular in which Chinese novels had been written in the past. And secondly, the decaying Chinese society which had not been able to produce a Meiji-type of reform had to undergo a renewal through revolution in order to be able to stand up to the foreign powers which humiliated China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus Marxism in China appealed to motives which in Europe were present in the Reformation with its vulgate and its peasant wars, in the French Revolution with its patriotic calls to arms in defence of the Republic, and in the Russian Revolution, before which the populist intelligentsia keenly felt the discrepancy between its own political and cultural aspirations and the economic and social back-

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wardness of the country. Obviously, more was involved here than just an alliance between a literary *avant-garde* of the European type and a Leninist political vanguard. But the misconceptions underlying the intimate relationship between literature and revolution in China were no less profound than elsewhere.

There was a variety of ideological positions among the new Chinese writers in the twenties. All of them aspired to progress through modernization; some embraced liberalism, some communism, some anarchism—all imported creeds. In the thirties the Chinese intelligentsia became more radical and the majority of writers joined the Party-sponsored League of Left-Wing Writers which was established in March 1930 with the help of the most famous modern Chinese writer, Lu Hsün. After the outbreak of the war with Japan many of them went to Yenan.

Yet the conflict between the Party and revolutionary writers had already started before.[13] Lu Hsün, Feng Hsüeh-feng, Hu Feng, Hu Ch'iu-yüan, and Su Wen constantly came into conflict with the League's Party supervisors, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai and Chou Yang (who became a Chinese Zhdanov). Lu Hsün died in 1936 and, like Gorky in Russia, was canonized in China as the patron saint of communist literature.

In Yenan, where the writers began to misbehave by producing some critical writings, a Forum on Literature and Art was organized in May 1942. It played the same role in subsequent literary development in China as the First Soviet Writers' Congress played in the Soviet Union. In China stringent Party control of literature had already been introduced before it had taken power in the country, at a time when Mao felt it no longer necessary to woo the writers (who were previously mainly concentrated in Shanghai). Mao Tse-tung himself laid down the canon. In his two speeches to the Forum [14] he called the writers sternly to task and told them that they must be ' oxen for the proletariat and the masses '. He declared: ' Our aim is to ensure that revolutionary literature and art follow the correct path of development.' He defined it as being called ' to perform faithfully functions of a component part of the revolutionary machine as a whole '. He added:

> Will not Marxism-Leninism then destroy the creative spirit? Yes. It will destroy any brand of creative spirit which is not of the masses and of the proletariat. . . . The intellectuals must identify themselves with the masses and must serve the masses. This process may, in fact it definitely will produce much suffering and friction.

It did. Ever since, the Party has tried to coax the recalcitrant writers by periodic campaigns designed to ' remould ' them. The first of these was immediately after the Yenan Forum and was directed against Wang

[13] Cf. Merle Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China* (Harvard University Press, 1967).

[14] Mao Tse-tung, *On Art and Literature* (Peking Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960).

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Shih-wei, the author of the popular book, *The Wild Lily*, who had the temerity to criticize in his writings the high-handedness of the Party cadres. Wang Shih-wei disappeared soon after the Yenan Forum and was never seen again. Another writer, Hsia Chun, the pupil of Lu Hsün, who defended Wang Shih-wei at Yenan, disappeared in 1948.

After the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 many other writers got into trouble for not conforming to the Chinese version of 'socialist realism' or simply to serve a didactic purpose as negative examples in various 'campaigns'. Earlier, Hsiao Chün, the most prominent Manchurian writer, was made the target of a rectification campaign, after the Red Army took over Manchuria (where he fought with the guerrillas). He was purged in 1948. Feng Hsüeh-feng, the friend of Lu Hsün, and a participant in the Long March, was repeatedly attacked in 1954 and 1957. His fellow-member of the League of Left-Wing Writers, Hu Feng, was being denounced all through 1955 in a nationwide drive against him. No less vicious was the campaign in 1957 against the famous woman writer, Ting Ling (a Stalin Prize winner), who was made to sweep the office of a Party bureaucrat as her punishment. In the same year of the anti-rightist movement, the epic poet Ai Ch'ing was purged, as were other less well-known writers who had been unwise enough to betray some of their inner feelings during the preceding period, the short liberal interval of the Hundred Flowers.

Subsequently, there were other clashes between the Party and the writers, such as those with the lyrical poet, Ho Ch'i-fang, in 1959 and 1960; but gradually the spirit of defiance had less and less chance to assert itself until it was decisively crushed in the Cultural Revolution. This was directed not only against the Party opponents of Mao, but also against historic Chinese cultural traditions. The intellectuals and the museums were attacked by the Red Guards and the campaign against the Confucian tradition continued after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

But it was not just the antics and excesses of the Red Guards after 1966 which crushed the Chinese literary intelligentsia who emerged from the Chinese Renaissance after 1917 and so enthusiastically adopted the cause of revolution in China. They were eliminated 'as a class', not like *kulaks* under Stalin at one blow, but through the continuous harassment of various campaigns which were conducted to teach them Mao's Yenan directives, how 'to serve the masses' and their Helmsman.

Before the Cultural Revolution some writers were made to rewrite their works published in pre-communist China and, like Sholokhov, Gladkov, and Fadeyev in the Soviet Union, they did not flinch from the task. The most famous case is that of Pai Chin, the popular Chinese anarchist writer (whose adopted name derives from Bakunin and Kropotkin), who since Mao's victory has renounced his views, accepted

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communism, and has taken out of his books all the numerous (and enthusiastic) references to anarchism.[15]

During the Cultural Revolution literature in China simply ceased to exist. Nothing was published but the utter trash of devotional writings extolling the genius of Mao and attacking his enemies. It was symbolic that the cradle of the modern Chinese literary and revolutionary movements, Peking University, was closed during the Cultural Revolution. The relation between literature and revolution cannot be illustrated by a more extreme example. The burning of the books under the Chinese Emperor in the first century BC was not done in the name of revolutionary ideology, but on the advice of a court official who recommended it in his memorandum to the ruler and added that 'people wishing to pursue learning should take the officials as their teachers'.

After the Cultural Revolution some books began to appear, but they seem to be designed, like literature in Stalin's Russia, for the edification of the Chinese *vydvizhentsy*, of the peasants and workers promoted from 'the masses' (for whom Peking University has been reopened). But it is not only the literary tastes of the Chinese intelligentsia which were sacrificed in Mao's permanent revolution, but their social role. In the process of their re-education, they were urged to be both 'red and expert'; during the Cultural Revolution they suffered a further social decline. Before the Chinese Revolution the literary intelligentsia was a small, but important, group; after the Cultural Revolution it practically disappeared. It is unlikely that it can play anything resembling its previous role. The new cultural policy which led to some relaxation of the shackles imposed by the Cultural Revolution and the erratic releases of non-Marxist books banned by it (such as Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, and Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*) cannot revive the social formation which has been crushed. Nor will the new foreign policy orientation make Western cultural influence play a role even remotely comparable to what it was in the pre-war period. The 'rehabilitation' of Chinese literary classics, previously prohibited, may restore some cultural continuity, but will certainly not revive the scholar-official or the Western-influenced intelligentsia.

A LESS extreme example of the conflict between literature and revolution, though in its international aspect a most interesting one, is Fidel Castro's Cuba. It illustrates the same pattern arising out of the logic of confrontation between the victorious revolutionaries and the *literati*. Here again there are basic differences from the other cases and yet the outcome, as far as this relationship is concerned, is similar.

[15] Olga Lang, *Pai Chin and His Writings* (Harvard University Press, 1967). He Ying-tzi, the author of the 'classic' Maoist play written in Yenan, *A Girl with White Hair*, re-wrote it during the Cultural Revolution and eliminated the rape of the girl 'to avoid wounding the feelings of peasant audiences'. (*Le Monde*, 18 February 1972.)

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When Castro came to power, he had the support of the middle class intellectuals who detested the Batista regime. There was not much intellectual content in his ideology. Castro was no intellectual; he described himself as 'a revolutionary man of action'. He quickly divested himself of those supporters from the 26 July Movement who were more liberal and less revolutionary than himself. But he was no communist. For various reasons the communist influence in Cuba was insignificant. When Castro proclaimed himself a 'Marxist-Leninist' he confessed that he had read *Das Kapital* only up to page 270. Cuban revolution did not have behind it the theoretical-ideological framework which existed before the seizure of power in other revolutions. It was elaborated only afterwards, in a confused form, to provide an ideological fig-leaf for a revolutionary drive. As Che Guevara put it in his *Notes for the Study of the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution*[16]:

> This is a unique revolution which some people maintain contradicts one of the most orthodox premises of the revolutionary movement, expressed by Lenin: 'Without a revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement'. . . . The principal actors of this revolution had no coherent theoretical criteria. . . . The Cuban Revolution takes up Marx at the point where he himself left science to shoulder his revolutionary rifle. . . . The laws of Marxism are present in the events of the Cuban Revolution, independently of what its leaders profess or fully know of those laws from a theoretical point of view. . . .

Castro, fired by similar revolutionary ardour and indifference towards theory, also stressed that 'it is anti-Marxist to try to enclose Marxism in a sort of catechism',[17] thus at first making a virtue out of the lack of necessity.

It is because of this refusal to develop a systematic ideology and a doctrinal bondage, because of the apparent spontaneity of the Cuban Revolution, of its perpetual militancy and of the relative insignificance of the Party functionaries, that Fidel and Che had such an appeal to the bohemian intelligentsia of the sixties who were again being fired by the revolutionary idea. Castro's *barbudos* lowered the profits of razor manufacturers in all the universities of the world. The romantic appeal of *Guantanamera* was not quite comparable to that of *La Marseillaise* or *Die Internationale*, but Castro, while maintaining his ultra-radical populist posture, allowed *avant-garde* films and literature. Both the Left Bank and Greenwich Village were enchanted. Rossana Rossanda, then still in the PCI, wrote enthusiastic reports in *l'Unita* about Castro's cultural tolerance, and so did Jean-Paul Sartre in *France Soir*. Castro's Cuba became his next Utopia after the Soviet Union. And he did not even have to write on returning from a visit to Cuba, as he did in 1954 on returning from the USSR, that writers expelled from their Union can

[16] *Verde Olivo*, 8 October 1960.
[17] Fidel Castro, *Major Speeches* (London, 1968).

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rehabilitate themselves 'by writing better books'. Left-wing intellectuals flocked to Havana from all over the world as they did 40 or 50 years earlier to Moscow. Cuban films merged nostalgically with *Potemkin*, Casa de las Americas with the Left Book Club. Progressive *bien-pensants* were invited to sit on various literary and artistic juries in Havana.

Yet in Havana the prospects of the literary *avant-garde* were gradually looking less and less rosy. At first there were small clouds on the horizon, such as the establishment of the National Council of Culture which could interfere with artistic work. But in his speech in June 1961, Castro, in striking contrast to Stalin and Mao, assured the intellectuals and writers that there was no need to fear:

> The revolution cannot by its very nature be an enemy of freedom: if some are worried about whether the revolution is going to stifle their creative spirit, that worry is not necessary, that worry has no reason to exist. . . . The existence of an authority in the cultural order does not mean that there is reason to be worried about that authority being abused.

Yet clouds were getting bigger, and as they did so more intellectuals began 'voting with their feet'. Many, including even such Castro supporters as the former editor of *Revolucion*, Carlos Franqui, or its former literary editor, Guillermo Cabiera Infante, went into exile; those who remained faced increased pressures for conformity. The case of Herberto Padilla, the well-known Cuban poet, was the culmination of these developments.

When Padilla received the annual literary prize in 1968 for his book of poems, *Fuera del Juego*, the army journal, *Verde Olivo*, furiously attacked the jury for this decision and called Padilla all sorts of names for his sins, which included, of course, lack of revolutionary enthusiasm. Had not Fidel himself said that 'the revolutionary cannot be anything else but an optimist?' According to *Verde Olivo*, Padilla was one of those 'whose spinelessness is matched only by their pornography and counterrevolution'. This was no longer the kind of chiding which was applied at the time when Che Guevara wrote in the same *Verde Olivo* (in his *Notes on Man and Socialism in Cuba*): 'Why should we try to find the only valid prescription for art in the frozen forms of socialist realism?' The increasing pressure on Cuban writers was reflected in further attacks on Padilla. The Young Communists' periodical, *El Caiman Barbudo* (*The Bearded Alligator*) published in 1968 several articles denouncing him viciously. One of these articles, written by the cultural official, Lisandro Otero, was particularly Zhdanovite in tone and style. This did not prevent Susan Sontag from writing an article in *Ramparts* (April 1969), 'Some Thoughts on the Right Way (for us) to Love the Cuban Revolution', in which she proclaimed that 'the Cuban revolution is astonishingly free of repression'

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and asserted that 'no Cuban writer has been or is in jail, or is failing to get his work published'.

Padilla was arrested in March 1971 and after slightly more than a month in jail, he confessed, in the best Stalinist style, to all the charges which were brought against him. Yes, he was a counterrevolutionary, a bad poet, and an insidious and malignant person. He had provided information to the two CIA agents, K. S. Karol and René Dumont (two left-wing friends of Castro living in Paris, who had become too critical in their recent books on Cuba). Evidently, more than one didactic target was involved.

When *Le Monde* published a whole page about the affair, the Left Bank intellectuals could not stand it any longer. Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and other 'progressives' addressed a strongly-worded open letter to Castro protesting about the Padilla affair (*Le Monde*, 9 April 1971). On 22 May 1971 *Le Monde* carried a second letter whose 61 signatories included Susan Sontag, Alberto Moravia, Jorge Semprun and Carlos Fuentes:

> The lamentable text of the confession signed by Herberto Padilla can only have been obtained by means which are the negation of revolutionary legality and justice. The contents of this confession, with its absurd accusations and delirious statements, as well as the painful parody of a self-criticism imposed on Herberto Padilla . . . recall the most sordid moments of the Stalinist period, with its prefabricated judgments and its witchhunts.

Padilla, according to *Prensa Latina* (the Cuban news agency), denounced the signatories' 'treachery' (*Le Monde*, 30–31 May 1971):

> You will say again that I have not written this letter, that it is not my style, you who have never been interested in my style, bourgeois liberals who have always considered me an underdeveloped writer and only pay attention to me now to attack the revolution . . . very well, continue to serve the CIA, imperialism, international reaction. Cuba does not need you.

Castro himself made the position clear in a speech addressed to the First National Congress of Education and Culture held in Havana on 30 April 1971. The Maximum Leader contemptuously dismissed the protest and its authors [18]:

> In these years we have become better and better acquainted with the world and the people who live in it. Some of these people were described here in clear and precise terms. Like those who even tried to present themselves as supporters of the Cuban Revolution, among whom there were some real tricksters and sharpies.

Castro denounced the 'bourgeois liberals' and 'pseudo-leftists', the 'snobbery' of 'Western fashions', declared that his approach to art was political, stressed the need to combat 'cultural colonialism', and denied

[18] *Casa de las Americas*, No. 65–66, March–June 1971, p. 25.

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the right of a few 'lost sheep' to their dissident ideas. His retort to the literary fellow-travellers of the Cuban revolution was loud and clear: no criticism is allowed and no 'false friends' who indulge in it will be tolerated. Internally, the implications of the 'Padilla affair' for Cuban writers and intellectuals were no less clear. They were spelled out in a *Declaration* adopted by the Congress [19]:

> All trends which are based on apparent ideas of freedom (*libertinaje*) as a disguise for the counterrevolutionary poison of works that conspire against the revolutionary ideology on which the construction of socialism and communism is based are inadmissible and to be condemned.

The Congress' *Declaration* listed a number of measures aimed at a uniform line in education and culture, including firm ideological indoctrination and stricter control of all media of communication. The not-sufficiently-vigilant editor of the weekly *Bohemia*, Enrique de la Osa, was dismissed, while the former editor of the hard-line *Verde Olivo* and one of Padilla's harshest critics, Luis Pavon, was nominated the head of the National Council of Culture. Padilla's wife, Belkis Cuza, rejected the protest by the left-wing Western writers against the treatment of her husband as 'a shameless provocation'.[20] The Director of Casa de las Americas, Haydee Santamaria, found it necessary to dissociate herself from their expression of solidarity with its defence of intellectual freedom, stressing in an open letter to the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa that it loyally supported the official line.

The protesting Western left-wing writers were banished to the enemy camp. One more love affair between 'progressive' literature and revolution came to an end.

THE point which emerges from a scrutiny of millenarian revolutions is only too clear: whatever their other effects, whether they are considered beneficial or harmful, they invariably have a disappointing, and often tragic, outcome for the writers caught in the mechanics of revolutionary and post-revolutionary regimes. Others may or may not benefit from the revolution, the writers—*qua* writers—most certainly do not. The conflict between writers and rulers in Eastern Europe confirms this observation. This conflict was aggravated by the fact that the revolutionary regimes in Eastern Europe, with the exception of Yugoslavia, were imposed from outside; there were no indigenous revolutions. But there too writers have suffered a similar fate and reacted in a similar manner to that of their fellow writers in more authentically native revolutionary regimes. The story of the plight of writers in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other East European countries

[19] Ibid. p. 16.

[20] *Le Monde* (23 April 1971) reported that she had praised 'the friendship of the comrades of State security, whose tenderness towards me in my situation brought tears to my eyes'. Juan Accocha, a close friend of Padilla, wrote in *Le Monde* (29 April 1971) that his 'confession must have been signed under torture', an allegation Padilla subsequently denied.

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need not be recounted here, nor their struggle for intellectual freedom. The East German *Aufstand der Intellektuellen*, the Polish October 1956, the Hungarian 1956 Revolution, the Prague Spring of 1968—in all these the writers played a paramount part. Everywhere in Eastern Europe they became disillusioned with the 'revolutionary' regimes imposed on them. And that applies also to the revolutionary writers.

In Poland there was little revolutionary literature before the last war. The work of the three representative communist poets extolling revolution was published in the twenties under the title *Three Salvoes*. Ironically, the title was almost prophetic, though not in the intended sense: of the three authors, two were killed by Stalin, Wandurski in 1932, Stande in 1938; the third, Broniewski, was imprisoned in 1940 when he too found himself in the Soviet Union. He was sent to a concentration camp, but later managed to leave the Soviet Union with General Anders' army. After the war he returned to Poland and later wrote a sycophantic *Ode to Stalin* which was included in school readers. He became a chronic alcoholic and died a broken man. He has since been canonized as a revolutionary bard, while his poems about Soviet prisons were of course carefully suppressed, as was later the *Ode to Stalin*. Another prominent Polish communist writer, Bruno Jasienski, was one of the originators of futurism in Polish literature. In France he wrote a novel *Je brûle Paris* (a *pendant* to Paul Morand's *Je brûle Moscou*), which was serialized in *l'Humanité*. He emigrated to the Soviet Union where he became editor of *Literatura Mirovoi Revolyutsii*, the organ of the World Association of Proletarian Writers (VAPP), and later of the Polish-language paper in the USSR, *Kultura Mas*; he wrote a novel, *Man Changes His Skin*, containing lyrical passages about the re-educative role of the NKVD, but he was denounced in 1937 by Pavel Yudin and arrested. He died in a concentration camp in 1941. Another Polish revolutionary poet, who although not a Party member was editor of the Polish communist *Literary Monthly*, Alexander Wat, was imprisoned in Lvov in 1940. He returned to Poland after the war a physical wreck as a result of his tribulations in the Soviet camps. He died in exile in Paris. Three other communist writers survived the war and became prominent in People's Poland: Andrzej Stawar, Stanislaw Wygodzki, and Igor Newerly. The first died in Paris, where he had written for the emigré monthly *Kultura* a book critical of the communist regime. The second went to Israel, having been purged as a 'Zionist' in 1968. The third has become one of the leaders of the liberal intellectual opposition, first under Gomulka and then under Gierek.[21] Similar cases occurred in other East European countries. In Hungary, the great poet, Atilla Jozef, who later committed suicide, had broken with the Communist Party before the war; in Czechoslovakia, the communist poet and writer, Zavis Kalandra, was arrested in 1948 as a Trotskyite and later executed. After experiencing life in communist regimes more and more writers became disenchanted. The lists of

[21] He was the defeated candidate of this opposition for the post of president of the Writers' Union at the Polish Writers' Congress in February 1972.

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contributors to *Irodalmi Ujsag* and to *Literarni Noviny* (later *Listy*) tell their own story.

The pattern of disillusionment in the East European countries after the war is not confined to older writers who 'embraced the Revolution', like the Polish writers mentioned above, or—say—Tibor Dery in Hungary. It extends to the younger writers who were educated in these regimes: Hlasko and Mrozek in Poland, Bierman in East Germany, Kundera and Havel in Czechoslovakia, and many others. In the post-destalinization period disillusionment often led to cynicism. It has become the prevalant trait among those writers who are on the 'revolutionary' bandwagon, but can no longer make themselves believe in the Newthink.

THE attitudes of the intelligentsia in East and West are sometimes equated, but it is the contrast which is more striking than any similarities. There is no substitute for experience. The writers caught between the Revolution and Utopia know that in practice they face a choice between intellectual prostitution and martyrdom. They know how difficult it is to avoid this choice. For a majority of them all sorts of compromises and rationalizations, from self-deception to Newspeak, are inevitable. The few heroic ones who choose martyrdom—like Solzhenitsyn—are the exceptions. It is extraordinary that this heroism of *chestnye pisateli* ('honest writers') is necessary to do what would after all appear to be the most ordinary thing: to write as they really feel. This elementary prerequisite of the literary vocation requires almost superhuman courage, involving as it does a challenge to the state which imposes on the writer an ideological straitjacket and an obligatory perception.

When a Mary McCarthy or a Graham Greene points out, perhaps with a touch of jealousy, that in the communist countries, unlike in the West, writers 'are at least taken seriously', they fail to notice that this is because writers there constitute potential channels for articulating attitudes based not on the official, but on the authentic individual perception, something which a Western writer takes for granted as a natural right.

The contrast between the intelligentsia East and West is striking indeed. What divides them more than anything else is life-experience: first hand knowledge in the one case, theoretical knowledge in the other. While Susan Sontag evokes with lusty enthusiasm what she calls 'a promiscuous idea of revolution', the attitude of those writers who have been compelled to live with it is somewhat less enthusiastic about this revolutionary promiscuity. Many examples could be given, but intellectually there has been nothing more comic (or pathetic) than the encounter between the representatives of the New Left and those of the Prague Spring, the first concerned with the idea of revolution, the second with its lack of a 'human face' in practice.

It is certainly no accident that at present the revolutionary idea is sincerely cherished among writers or intellectuals only where it has not

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triumphed, in places where post-revolutionary *praxis* can be safely disregarded. It is much easier to believe the revolutionary myth of our time on the Stanford campus than—say—in Czechoslovakia or Poland, and therefore the number of 'true believers' is greater in Stanford than in those two countries taken together.

YET—more seriously—the question of the persistence of the revolutionary idea remains. Its vicissitudes and metamorphoses cannot be understood in terms of any 'laws of history', of postulated historical regularities or consciousness, whether Hegelian or Marxian, Leninist or Stalinist, Maoist or Marcusian. As with other religious or mythological ideas, its destinies cannot be explained in terms of 'historical materialism'.

The concept of social revolution made its first appearance in the sixteenth century. It was based on the metaphorical application of the notion of the cyclical movement of heavenly bodies (*De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium* was the title of the Copernicus treatise) to social unrest.[22] It was already used in this sense by Montaigne, but acquired its modern connotation only after the Glorious Revolution in which ideological longings were still expressed in religious terms. Cromwell's soldiers marched with the Bible in their hands, the radical Fifth Monarchy men engaged in theological debate. Between the Glorious Revolution and the French Revolution the revolutionary and utopian urges became secularized. The search for the City of God, for the New Jerusalem, gave way to the search for the City of Man, or, as Melvin J. Lasky put it, 'the idea of revolution moved from astronomy to sociology, the idea of utopia from theology to politics'. In the nineteenth century the revolutionary idea underwent further transformations. It was now linked with the idea of history (which replaced the idea of God). In Vico history was still governed by 'Providence', in Hegel 'the problem of history is the problem of consciousness', in Marx it becomes a natural process governed by scientific laws. In Vico history is still cyclical, in Hegel it is already progressive (through the dialectical development of the world spirit), in Marx it also unfolds dialectically, but in Marxist historical materialism Hegel is put on his head.

Engels claimed at Marx's funeral that he did for history what Darwin had done for biology, but whatever the status of Darwinism today, there can be little doubt that the original intellectual baggage of Marxism had to be abandoned. It had undergone such theoretical mutations that its historical expansion and continuous attraction as a revolutionary creed can be understood only in terms of its mythopoeic appeal, not of its heuristic merits.

At first it was a theory of social change through the development of the forces of production. But, rather than removing the fetters on

[22] Melvin J. Lasky traced it in detail in op. cit.; also cf. 'The Birth of a Metaphor', *Encounter*, February and March 1970.

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production in countries where it was supposed to develop only if 'the capitalist integument' were to 'burst asunder' through a proletarian revolution, Marxism, contrary to its own premises, moved into a growing number of undeveloped countries. The history of Western industrial countries did not confirm the social and political expectations of many generations of Marxists, beginning with Marx himself. In Russia Marxism underwent a populist voluntaristic inversion by Lenin, who made the first revolutionary step away from Marxist orthodoxy by deciding to jump over the Marxian stages of economic development. Since 1917 revolutionary 'Marxists' have been enlarging the extent of such historical 'jumps'; there are no more agonizing doctrinal discussions about whether a country is or is not 'ripe' for 'socialism'. It can now be delivered from all kinds of social 'wombs', from the nomadic People's Republic of Mongolia to the tribal 'People's Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)'. Under Stalin Marxism became in effect a doctrine about forcible industrialization of a backward economy, hardly a Marxian perspective.

While the new Marxist gospel was spreading, it was steadily losing its original intellectual character through adaptation to local backgrounds—resulting in the Russification, Sinification, Latinization of Marxism, and through the concomitant erosion of its general theoretical premises. Ideological unity came to an end. As with other schisms, each major polycentric splinter claimed universal validity for its own orthodoxy.

The twisting of Marx's own intellectual perspective through selective quotations of the canon has reached the point of absurdity. In China Liu Shao-chi was attacked for the anti-Marxist heresy which the official Maoist press calls 'the reactionary theory of productive forces . . . [which] describes social development as a natural outcome of the development of productive forces only, especially the development of the tools of production'.[23] One could well imagine what would happen to Marx if he were to advance his theory in China today!

Moving from the Far East to the Wild West, one is struck by a Marxist revival in industrialized countries, but intellectually it is a phenomenon which has very little to do with Marx's own theories. Western Marxism is being kept alive as a 'critical theory' by increased injections of Hegelianism; Marcuse went back not only to Hegel, but beyond that to Rousseau. As he put it in his *Eros and Civilization*: 'From Plato to Rousseau, the idea of a pedagogic dictatorship exercised by those who are generally thought to have acquired a knowledge of the true good is the only answer. This answer has been forgotten.' They always know better: the secular elect of predestinarian history, the Hegelian *illuminati* and the Marxist *cognoscenti* of the historical process, the Lukacses, the Brechts, the Marcuses. But it is the Lenins, Stalins, and Maos who decide what is the 'true good'.

[23] *Peking Review*, 10 September 1971.

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Marcuse, as Lucien Goldmann enthusiastically observed,[24] 'brought "critical theory" ['a term by which Marcuse means Marxism'] back to Utopia'. But how Marxian—and how critical—is this new version of 'critical theory'? Marx would scarcely recognize it as his child or grandchild. Goldmann assures us—somewhat defensively—that 'for Marcuse, the concrete form of the reality principle in contemporary society is the principle of productivity'. Contrary to Goldmann's assertion, which is complimentary and formulated in Freudian language, Marcuse himself is not at all inclined towards such a reactionary Marxian deviation *à la* Liu Shao-chi; in fact, he removed Marx's 'forces of production' from their pedestal in the centre of the theory. The reason for this is of course precisely the opposite of Mao's: for Marcuse it is not a question of the weak development of the 'forces of production', as it is in China, but of their superabundance in America. For him, the central preoccupation is not the question of liberating the forces of production in a capitalist society, as it was for Marx, but of liberating man from the 'surplus repression' in the hated affluent society created by capitalism. Like Max Stirner—'Saint Max' so harshly criticized by Marx in *The German Ideology*—Marcuse dreams of the complete release of instinctual drives and envisages 'the state of unrepressed gratification', of 'non-repressive sublimation'.

The revolutionary idea has thus taken another turn: this time from economics to psychoanalysis, from Marx to Freud (and beyond), from sociological to psychological Utopia.[25] Marcuse is sceptical about what he calls 'the materialist concept of reason in history' and, having abandoned 'productive forces' as the analytical linch-pin of the theory, he also dismisses Marx's chosen class, the industrial proletariat, as the historical instrument of revolutionary liberation. Indeed he rejects Marx's class analysis altogether: 'Today, the force of negation is concentrated in no one class. Politically and morally, rationally and instinctively, it is a chaotic anarchistic opposition; the refusal to join and play a part, the disgust of all prosperity, the compulsion to protest.'[26]

[24] Lucien Goldmann, 'Understanding Marcuse', *Partisan Review*, No. 3, 1971. In a recent interview (*Politique Hebdo*, 2 December 1971), Marcuse said: 'The coming revolution, the revolution of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, requires as an introduction a radical transformation of the needs, of the consciousness, and of the sensibility. . . . The emergence of the new sensibility will probably have as a first consequence the reduction of productivity. . . .'

[25] But 'psychological radicals'—Norman O. Brown, Herbert Marcuse, R. D. Laing—cannot provide a solid basis for a Utopian ideology which would serve as an inspiration for social movement. It is too esoteric and therefore is likely to be ephemeral. *Das Kapital* may not have been read by the masses, but the economic category of 'surplus value' could be easily translated into demotic language: 'exploitation'. How can it be done with the psychological category of 'surplus repression'? Even the new revolutionary categories of Marcuse, the students and the blacks, the lumpenproletariat and the lumpenintelligentsia, cannot easily identify with or act upon his ideas. No wonder that the 'new revolutionaries' are no longer very interested in Marcuse. Like him they believe in the dictatorship of the minority, but they are not concerned with such intangibles as 'surplus repression'.

[26] Herbert Marcuse, 'The concept of negation in the dialectic', *Telos*, No. 8 (Summer 1971), p. 132.

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He does not indicate, however, how the liberation of the Id is to be combined with the ecological balance, or the permissive society with the pedagogic dictatorship. Once 'repressive tolerance' is abolished, 'revolution without terror' will no doubt solve these simple problems quite easily. Today hypocrisy is the tribute which revolution pays to liberalism.

But it is only intellectually that Marxist theoretical tergiversations are contradictory; consistency and continuity are provided by the revolutionary and utopian elements underlying the Marxist appeal. It is only thus that one can understand its persistence and expansion, and indeed its emergence. In this perspective, the Utopian urge (and the cosmic hubris) of Marcuse is similar to that of his Promethean predecessor. Here is what Marx wrote about communism in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*: 'It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution.'

What Marx called 'empirical history' or 'the real movement of history' has hardly brought these lofty goals nearer in any post-revolutionary society. Yet intellectual rationalizations of secular Utopias are indeed related to 'the real movement of history': they are constructed on the basis of contemporary reality and like all fantasies they both embody certain of its elements and are somewhat limited by it. In the pre-industrial age Rousseau idealized primitive man, emerging industrialism was the basis of Marx's 'scientific' vision of the future, and 'post-industrial society' provides the context for Marcuse's projected Psytopia (or Eupsychia). As with all Utopians, it is not only a vision of the future but also a return to the past: to the 'noble savage' in Rousseau, to 'primitive communism' (elevated to 'full communism' at a higher technological stage) in Marx, to the child-like instincts of man corrupted by capitalist affluence in Marcuse. There is thus a convergence here of the blessed future and of the innocent past, of Utopia and Arcadia.[27]

[27] However, with all their illusions, Rousseau and Marx were thinkers of genius who were not simply escaping from reality. Marcuse, on the other hand, raised 'infantile regression' to the status of ideology. It is difficult to imagine how such an ideology can begin to be implemented. Presumably after the revolution people will still be acting 'at first' on the basis of their 'corrupted' instincts which will not disappear overnight with the disappearance of 'capitalist society'. It was discovered in the communist countries that a New Man cannot yet be created because of the alleged 'survivals of capitalism in human consciousness'. How would our new liberators handle such 'survivals' in human subconsciousness after the victory of the people in 1984, when it will be necessary to exercise a 'pedagogic dictatorship' on their behalf? Would not 'surplus repression' have to be dealt with by Red Mental Guards on People's Psychoanalytical Couches?

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THE nineteenth and twentieth centuries also witnessed a further convergence of Utopian and revolutionary ideas. As Peter Struve shrewdly observed, revolution itself becomes Utopia. The instrument merges with the goal: the emotions invested in the vision of the ideal society are transposed onto the mechanism which is supposed to bring it about. For those 'dreaming revolution' the future indefinite becomes the future definite. In this way they can retain their quasi-religious intensity of feeling about the coming redemption, concentrate on the struggle for power, and postpone thinking about the real problems a government in any society has to face until the post-revolutionary advent of Utopia. For 'true believers' *in partibus infidelium* the disappointing nature of the post-revolutionary experience reinforces rather than weakens this shift in their mythopoeic focus. Faith is preserved by ignoring experience and concentrating emotionally on revolutionary means rather than on Utopian ends. But if the persistence of the revolutionary idea is due to those psychological factors which facilitate the 'Festinger effect',* its expansion also depends on the appeal of this idea to categories other than 'true believers'. This appeal varies: social conditions are not the only factors which enhance it. Political and cultural traditions, as well as the credibility of the revolutionary idea itself, play an important role in specific historical instances of revolutionary failures and successes. In our own time the New Left itself has severed the umbilical cord which linked economic and class conditions with the emergence of a revolutionary situation in the traditional Marxist approach. Régis Debray moved Leninist 'voluntarism' from the exploitation to the creation of a revolutionary situation. New revolutionary techniques are to bring about, if not the millennium, at least the dictatorship of the minority which is necessary to establish it. Historically, the quest for secular salvation leads to a progressive narrowing down of the gap between the hope and the implementation. If revolution is a short cut to Utopia, revolutionary impatience first telescopes the 'bourgeois' and the 'socialist' revolutions, then the 'bourgeois revolution' disappears as a necessary precondition for a 'socialist revolution', and finally there is not even any need to wait for a revolutionary situation to bring revolution about: terror becomes a short cut to revolution, for which rural or urban guerrillas have to establish *foci*. All the old 'theoretical' discussions, in which generations of Marxist revolutionaries spent their lives chopping logic and splitting hairs over this or that formulation, in which an ocean of ink was spilt over the proper location of a comma in myriads of documents analysing revolutionary prospects, turned out to be irrelevant after all. Historically, the only reality behind these exercises was the revolutionary will embracing the revolutionary myth. In this respect there is really little difference between Lenin and the contemporary 'new revolutionaries', except that in their case the "theoretical' fig-leaf is even more trans-

* Cf. p. 42.

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parent; they aim at a revolution *tout court*, without any adjective but with a capital R.

REVOLUTIONARY revivalism came to the West when the revolutionary myth ceased to be associated with the Soviet Union. The word 'revolution' re-acquired a mythical undertone among the Western intelligentsia, particularly among those who, according to Sartre (and Hegel), are defined as intellectuals through their *conscience malheureuse*. But most of the prominant writers were not so easily taken in. And it was not just a matter of 'once bitten twice shy', although this played a role, or of the once-young writers on the left moving to the right at a more mature age, although this also played a part; it was the whole experience of the revolutionary epoch they had gone through. Reflections on it began with the literature of disillusion by Koestler, Orwell, Silone, Sperber. This had a powerful effect, but it was the actual impact of contemporary events that made most of today's outstanding writers less than enthusiastic about revolutionary developments and the role of writers in them. 'Poets aren't the unacknowledged legislators of the world', Auden said recently; 'it is the secret police who are.'[28] No less characteristic is the reflection of Saul Bellow in *Mr Sammler's Planet*: 'There were no revolutions that he could remember which had not been made for justice, freedom and pure goodness. Their last state was always more nihilistic than the first.'

Even the old communist writers in the West reflect the same disenchantment, although they remain loyal to the Party. Aragon declared in an interview[29] that he 'always rebelled against socialist realism' and that he would never have joined the Communist Party if he had read Gladkov's *Cement* at the time. It is the same Aragon who had written *Pour un réalisme socialiste* and who now proclaimed:

> Stalinism created conditions of credulity for people like me, it is true. But one cannot say that I was a Stalinist in the sense that this word has acquired for me today.

There is nothing like the semantic power of retrospective reinterpretation! But it is surely indicative that such declarations are made by a writer who in the thirties wrote a eulogistic poem about the GPU and attacked Picasso for drawing a not sufficiently reverential portrait of Stalin, after the death of the beloved leader.

Aragon is not alone. A similar statement was made by Pablo Neruda, author of an *Ode to Stalin*, who complained that the Stalinists had done him 'the greatest wrong'.[30]

If two such old Stalinist literary war-horses feel compelled to make such declarations, it is clear that as far as the Soviet Union is concerned its revolutionary appeal is dead and buried. Indeed, of all the prominent

[28] *The Guardian*, 9 October 1971.
[29] *L'Express*, 20–26 September 1971.
[30] *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 25 October 1971.

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Western communist or (once) fellow-travelling writers mentioned in this article only seven are given as representing the 'socialist realist position' in the Soviet book on literature and revolution quoted earlier. Six of them—Romain Rolland, Theodore Dreiser, Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig, Paul Eluard, Bertold Brecht—are safely dead. The seventh is Louis Aragon. One wonders whether his name will remain in the next edition of the book (which will no doubt again open with the words: 'The Great October Socialist Revolution had a decisive influence on world literature').

As far as Marxist literary aesthetics is concerned, nothing can better illustrate its utter bankruptcy than Lukacs' *boutade* that Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is the only Soviet 'socialist-realist' book. There is more to it than a paradox by an erstwhile Stalinist theoretician of art with bourgeois literary tastes. He argued, quite seriously, that Solzhenitsyn is a 'socialist-realist' writer and that Lukacs' favourite concept of a concrete universal can be applied to *Ivan Denisovich*. But even if it is true, though Lukacs did not quite say so, that a concentration camp represents a 'concrete universal' of Stalinist Russia, this still does not help us to realize what constitutes the artistic superiority of Solzhenitsyn over—say—Dudintsev, who deals in his *Not by Bread Alone* with a problem which also constitutes a 'concrete universal' in the Soviet Union.

We are some way from the period when Marxist aesthetics was explaining *Don Quixote* by referring to Cervantes as representing the interests of the impoverished *hidalguia*,[31] or the *Crimean Sonnets* by Mickiewicz as reflecting the movement of grain prices on the Odessa stock exchange. But despite the valiant efforts of Lucien Goldmann and Roland Barthes, the central problem of how to avoid reducing aesthetics to the sociology of art still baffles Marxists. One can learn many interesting things in *Le Dieu Caché*, but not what constitutes the continued appeal of Racine. Marx frankly acknowledged his own difficulties vis-à-vis this problem in respect to Greek art. He believed that 'material transformations can be determined with the precision of natural science', but in the same *Outline of the Critique of Political Economy* he wrote:

> The difficulty does not lie in the fact . . . that Greek art and epic are bound to certain forms of social development. The difficulty is that they still provide us with artistic pleasure and in a certain sense represent for us a norm and an unattainable standard.

Yet Marx never faced the contradiction between his view of art as, simply, reflecting various social formations, and his belief in the timeless value of Greek art. He tried to cope with this difficulty by saying that Greek art represents 'the childhood of mankind' which 'exercizes its charm as a never recurring stage', but this is a lame explanation. Not

[31] Cf. Ludmilla Buketoff Turkevich, *Cervantes in Russia* (Princeton University Press, 1950).

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only Greek, but all great art, has this timeless value which points to the ultimate autonomy of the intellect vis-à-vis the Marxist economic base.

Ultimately, Marx was as helpless in his analysis of revolution as he was in his analysis of art and literature. He wrote several drafts of an answer to Vera Zasulich, who had asked him whether Russia could attain socialism without going through the stage of capitalism but, perhaps for Freudian reasons, he never sent them. Vera Zasulich is still waiting for a reply.

The building of 'socialism' in so many undeveloped countries still poses the same unanswerable question to those who start their analysis from Marxian premises. No matter what additional qualifications are introduced into the theory, they cannot answer this question, just as they cannot explain the spread of Marxism itself (or Christianity, or Buddhism, or Islam) in terms of the relation between the economic base and ideological superstructure.

Literature and the continuing attraction of great art cannot be explained by any kind of historicism. Pasternak said that 'poetry and history are separate universes, one exists in eternity, the other in time'; the poet is 'eternity's hostage to time' ('*Vechnosti zalozhnik u vremeni v plenu*'). Malraux wrote that 'eternity is contained within the work of art', Blake that 'eternal principles or characters in human life appear to poets in all ages'. Clearly there is sufficient universality in human problems and sufficient consonance, despite all the changes in style and form, between great writers and artists and their audience throughout time, to make a mockery of any aesthetic theory which tries to reduce the analysis of art to historical or sociological relativities. The relativity of tastes is an important but not a crucial question in aesthetics. Among contemporary Marxists Arnold Hauser is still trying to rescue Marxist aesthetics by insisting on the ideological nature of thought, on the relativity of knowledge, and on their correspondence to class and social background. But Lucien Goldmann, while adopting the same approach, admits in his introduction to *Le Dieu Caché* that Marx's question about Greek art is still puzzling. His own answer to it contradicts the basic premise of Marxist aesthetics and hardly amounts to an attempt to face the problem squarely: 'A philosophy or work of art can keep its value outside the time and place where it first appeared only if, by expressing a particular human situation, it transposes this onto the plane of the great human problems created by man's relationship with his fellows and with the universe.'

This is as lame as Marx's own 'childhood of humanity' explanation, and anyway it practically concedes the case by treating it as a question of hermeneutics rather than of history. Marx and the Marxists always denied the existence of 'eternal values' and insisted on historical relativity, but literature is concerned not just with *la condition sociale* but with *la condition humaine*, and that means that it cannot abandon some of the most important human preoccupations for the sake of an *ersatz* religion which disregards the mystery of man's existence, bans

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metaphysics, and, having raised the revolutionary phenomenon to a totemic position, fails to explain it. Marcuse refers to the 'aesthetic anthropology' of Marx, but it is better to call it, with Professor Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr., 'a nineteenth-century anthropomorphic positivism'. In its narrow perspective it cannot deal satisfactorily either with aesthetic questions concerning literature or with anthropological questions concerning religion, because it turns away from what is to human beings literally a question of life and death. An attempt to impose this arid positivistic perspective on society inevitably leads to the trivialization of literature. When rigidly enforced it can only result in shallowness of thought and feeling. It can produce neither the *Divine Comedy* nor the *Human Comedy,* but only the *Optimistic Tragedy.*

The cheap juxtaposition in the title of Vishnevsky's play could be matched only if Hollywood were to produce a film of *Oedipus Rex* or *Antigone* with a happy ending. Such juxtapositions make the rationale of human suffering and sacrifice incomprehensible and tragedy meaningless. Optimistic tragedy makes as much sense as metaphysical positivism or hedonistic transcendentalism. In Vishnevsky's play there is not even a happy ending, only a promise of one in the inevitably bright future. It is of course an expression of the secular progressive belief in a 'scientific' unfolding of history as an escalator to higher and better things, but it is hardly compatible with the concept of tragedy.

FOR writers who have a less superficial view of the human predicament the trivialization of human problems and of their literary perception is much more crucial than the question of external censorship of their writings. It is a situation in which the sensibility of the writer has to be sacrificed to the ruling ideology. When writers try to perceive things along the expected lines, they have to deny their own authenticity. Censorship interferes only with freedom of expression; obligatory perception and self-censorship—with creativity itself. Poets are worse hit as they rely to a greater degree than others on involuntary or subconscious thought in the 'act of creation'.[32] If they manage to censor themselves they cease to be creative; if they do not they are politically vulnerable. That is why there have been so many victims among them.

It was no accident that the call for 'sincerity in literature' (by Pomerantsev) was the first demand for cultural change made in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. Then came the insistence on the restoration of genuine meanings to words. *Samizdat* emerged because neither was made possible. Freedom of thought is inseparable from freedom of expression, but in Soviet conditions the former is particularly important.

One example can make this point clear: the character of the official 'rehabilitation' of previously taboo authors. This is often misunderstood in the West, where it is taken as straight proof of liberalization

[32] Cf. Stanley Burnshaw, *The Seamless Web*, p. 51.

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and of the extension of freedom of thought for the Soviet intellectual public. In some sense this may be so, if the writings were not previously available, but public rehabilitation is done in such a way that the essential message of the authors in question is twisted and emasculated. Two sensitive cases, Kafka and Dostoyevsky, illustrate the point. Both were 'rehabilitated' despite the dangerous implications of their thought. But how were they presented? Kafka was the subject of a critical reappraisal [33] in which the die-hards continued to attack him, while even those who were appreciative spoke and wrote in such a way that the very essence of Kafka's concern with the human condition vanishes altogether. What is one to make of the following appraisal?

> In the creative works of Kafka there is a criticism of great force. However, Kafka projected the characteristic traits of bourgeois society onto human society in general; he absolutized and almost deified the evil strength of capitalist bureaucracy.[34]

Does any reader think that *The Castle* may have some relevance to Soviet bureaucracy or *The Trial* to Stalinist purges? Perish the thought! They are relevant only to 'bourgeois society' and 'capitalist bureaucracy'. There are no 'eternal truths', literature only 'reflects' its own time and society. Therefore Kafka can only 'reflect' the horrible experience of Austro-Hungarian administrative practices, but cannot be taken as a guide to Soviet society, QED. It may be that despite all this, the 'rehabilitation' of Kafka and other non-*kosher* writers means, as Max Hayward says, 'a gradual extension of Soviet consciousness', but one should also take into account the official efforts to determine its depth and quality. The same goes for Dostoyevsky. After years of being reviled, the author of *The Possessed* has been eulogized on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth. The former standard view of his 'arch-reactionary thought' has been forgotten and *Pravda* (11 November 1971) announced on the day of the anniversary:

> There is no reason why we should abandon this great writer to the reactionaries. We cannot reconcile ourselves to reactionaries and idealists who claim Dostoyevsky as their own.

In order to appropriate Dostoyevsky and make him into one of the progressive predecessors of Soviet literature, a 'delicate' reinterpretation was necessary. Lenin's comment that Dostoyevsky was 'arch-bad' is no longer quoted. *The Possessed* is no longer described as 'a furious libel on the Russian liberation movement' (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. 15, 1952), but as 'an anatomy and critique of ultra-left extremism' (B. L. Suchkov in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 17 November 1971). Even Gorky has been recruited to the ranks of the followers of Dostoyevsky! The two writers have been presented as akin to each other

[33] Cf. Guy de Mallac, 'Kafka in Russia', *The Russian Review* (January 1972), pp. 64–73.

[34] L. G. Andreyev and R. M. Samarin, *Istoriya Zarubezhnoi Literatury Posle Oktyabrskoi Revolyutsii*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1969).

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in an article by N. Zhegalov, ' Dostoyevsky and Gorky ', in *Literaturnaya Rossiya* (12 November 1971). The article concludes that only in socialist realism can there be ' a deep, creative assimilation of the traditions and the legacy of the classics '. Indeed. Roger Garaudy has done this in a more sophisticated way in his *Réalisme sans rivages*. But he has been excommunicated, so one cannot even say that when there is no Stalin, then everything is permitted. Not even within the narrow framework of ' socialist realism '. But whatever is permitted to the Soviet literary critics bears no relation to the essence of Dostoyevsky's genius. He saw the implications of the marriage between revolutionary mythology and utilitarian ethics in Russia more clearly than anybody else. Today brings this judgment on his insights:

> Dostoyevsky was a genius at foreseeing, but what he could never foresee was that his novels would participate in the construction of socialism.[35]

Ivan Karamazov was right. If there is no God, then everything is permitted. However, he could hardly have imagined that it would lead to the transformation of Dostoyevsky into a ' progressive writer '! Could anyone visualize the author of *The Possessed* ' participating in the construction of socialism ' under Mr Brezhnev? ! Even Stalin would have been surprised to see that while Trotsky is still branded in the Soviet Union as a counter-revolutionary, Dostoyevsky is no longer regarded as one. What a strange outcome of the encounter between literature (surviving) and revolution (stale)! Fifty-five years have passed since the revolutionary upheaval; the average human being is not appreciably nearer the level of Aristotle or Goethe, but Smerdyakov is still in charge of *Agitprop*.

IN the West, it is Trotsky rather than Dostoyevsky who has been undergoing a revival. He has been romanticized by Isaac Deutscher, Peter Weiss, and Richard Burton. His permanent revolution has been preached by the ' new revolutionaries ', many of them of impeccable bourgeois origin, like Tariq Ali or Teresa Hayter, enacting *The Possessed* without having read it.

The wave of revolutionary romanticism in the sixties affected of course Western ' progressive writers ', but apart from them the general response of writers has been different from what it was in the thirties. Far fewer have been ready to fall for the same kind of myth; others displayed sympathy for the ' new revolutionaries '—on them the lessons of the thirties were lost. But they were no longer pro-Soviet and their ' revolutionary ' commitment was no longer unambiguous. It was somewhat constrained, reflecting the fashions of the day rather than a deeper involvement. As usual, whether in New York or Paris, they were influenced by the moods of Greenwich Village or the Left Bank, although

[35] V. Dneprov ' Dostoyevsky kak Pisatel Dvadtsatogo Veka ', *Inostrannaya Literatura*, No. 11 (1971), p. 200.

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many of them were now living in far more fashionable quarters. But although there were fewer writers among the militant 'progressives' than in the thirties, and they were far more vague in their ideas, they were ready to jump on the revolutionary bandwagon, even though they were not quite clear in which direction it was rolling in the polycentric world, or indeed whether it was rolling at all. The appetite for revolutionary myth and progressive equivocation has been fully displayed during the past decade in the representative journal of 'radical chic', *The New York Review of Books*.

TO analyse various revolutions it is of course necessary to study the social and economic conditions at the time, the state of political institutions, the needs and hopes of the population, the existence and characteristics of the counter-elite, the effectiveness of military controls, and many other factors on which the success of the revolutionary idea depends. But the idea itself rests on a myth and in order to understand it one has to analyse the nature of myths. This would go beyond the scope of this essay. It is sufficient to say that there is a fundamental ambivalence in the concept of myth which goes back to the Greek philosopher Euhemerus, who first tried to 'decipher' myths as allegorical history. Hegel and Marx regarded myths in the same light. Both were strongly influenced by the rationalistic perspective of the Enlightenment. Marx's concept of ideology as a mask has a strong affinity with the view of myth as nothing but a form of embellished 'false consciousness'. Freud, Jung, Frazer, and Malinowski went beyond this perspective and considered the psychological and social character of myths. Sorel was preoccupied by their political function. Cassirer examined in terms of neo-Kantian epistemology their relation to language and the state. Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell analysed their functions on a comparative basis, starting with the Jungian premise that myths are public dreams. Lévi-Strauss explicitly rejected the idea that their significance can be seen in terms of 'truth' and substituted the criterion of 'coherence' in his Structuralist approach. In this approach myths are seen in the light of their social function, not historically, and their 'meaning' is no longer related to the question of 'reality'. It can be argued of course that any epistemological quest must in the end stumble on the problem of the 'hermeneutic circle', but that does not mean that one can avoid philosophical premises even in the most sophisticated anthropological analysis of the concept of myth. The ambivalence may be implicit or explicit, but it is there. Coherent or not, myth may be regarded as mystification or as deeper truth, whatever its function and whether it is considered necessary or not.

The question becomes clearer and less esoteric when one considers the relation between myth and literature, which is more relevant to the question of the relation between the revolutionary myth and literature. The ambivalence inherent in the concept of myth, seen *either* as a falsehood *or* as the profoundest symbolic expression of moral, aesthetic, and existen-

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tial choices, justifying life and 'making sense' of it, is particularly pertinent in literature. This is so because literature is peculiarly involved both with the ends and the means served by myths. As John Armstrong put it,[36] 'Myths are the most accurate means that the human mind has devised, representing its own immeasurably complex structure and content. They are essentially poetic formations. . . . Men create myths because the intricacies of our mental life require a more subtle and sophisticated medium of expression than abstract discourse can provide. Besides being inadequate and unenlightening in this field, abstractions tend to leave us cold.' The literary Western Marxist revisionists like Roger Garaudy and Ernst Fischer tend to accept this view, despite the fact that they subscribe to the positivistic legacy of Marxism. Garaudy wrote that the creation of myths 'is the essential function of art from Homer to Cervantes, from Goethe's *Faust* to Gorky's *Mother*, which questions the world and at the same time challenges the order of the world in the name of that heroic image which man at all times has made of his destiny and his future'. Quoting this in his *Art Against Ideology*, Ernst Fischer 'essentially agrees' with it, only adding that the creation of myths is not the only essential function of art: 'Art can carry out one of its functions—that of criticizing the status quo—by the use of myth, but equally well by the use of anti-myth (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Madame Bovary*, and *Anna Karenina* are all, it seems to me, devoid entirely of any mythic character).' In contrast to Fischer, Roland Barthes, combining semiology and Marxism, concentrates on the legitimizing function of myth, which permeates 'bourgeois' culture, obscures bourgeois reality, and tries to conceal it in order to perpetuate the status quo. A revolutionary society does not need any myth which would create a mystifying picture of itself. Deciphering mythology is for this Parisian 'anti-Stalinist' *gauchiste* simply a question of destroying the false pretences of 'bourgeois' society. 'Left-wing myth is inessential.' Here Marcuse is joined by Barthes: the first is ready to apply the concept of tolerance only to the Left, the second applies the concept of myth (in the pejorative sense) only to the Right. Both push aside not only Kantian universals but also some of Marx's own views of man and history in their obstinate political Manicheism. How anybody seriously concerned with the problem of contemporary myths can disregard the revolutionary myth is beyond comprehension. With 'anti-Stalinists' like Barthes, who dismiss the Stalinist myth as 'inessential', one really does not need the old Stalinist *apparatchiki* from *Agitprop* to perpetuate it. The sophisticated blindness of the *gauchiste* intellectual is sufficient in itself to make us understand another element in the persistence of myths: the need to rationalize the *credo* 'when the prophecy fails' (which I called earlier 'the Festinger effect' * with reference to Professor Festinger's book on the subject). Both Barthes and Garaudy, despite their contrary

[36] op. cit.

* Cf. p. 34.

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views of the concept of myth, share an ideological approach to it: for the first it is negative because it preserves the 'bourgeois' status quo; for the second it is positive because it brings about change in the status quo. Which only goes to show that both are still prisoners of the revolutionary myth, as they are ready to idealize change *per se*, rather than view it on its merits.

Viewed in this way, revolution loses its mythical character and becomes a problem of political and social change which is to be assessed in terms of its costs and consequences. It can also be seen as not just a mechanism of political and social change—which is how it is usually viewed—but as a complex process in which some institutions and patterns of behaviour change, while change in others is prevented or delayed. It is arguable, for instance, that without the Revolution industrialization would have developed more quickly in France; that without it the Reform Bill would almost certainly have been enacted in Britain much earlier; that without the October Revolution the institution of autocracy would have been weakened, not strengthened in Russia (with all the attendant derivative instances of arrested development from agriculture to technological innovation, from the freedom of the press to the rule of law). When Clio is raped she takes her revenge: in all the countries where major revolutions have taken place and/or major revolutionary changes have been introduced, continuity reasserted itself with a vengeance after a time. Perhaps to reassert their identity, the societies in question cling even more closely to their traditions whatever they are, when their evolution has been interrupted by a revolutionary 'jump'. This precludes rather than accelerates change in those traditions which are not, or no longer, desirable. It also reinforces the nationalism of these societies, making a mockery of revolutionary professions of friendship towards other peoples.

But perhaps the most pertinent new factor introduced by millenarian revolutions arises from the merger itself of the ideas of revolution and Utopia. It means that the new authority established by the revolution owes its legitimacy to the implementation of Utopia and that implies a permanent revolution unless the idea of Utopia is abandoned or rendered innocuous by semantic-ideological reinterpretations. But to get off the tiger is awfully difficult; it undermines revolutionary legitimacy and raises the cry of 'revolution betrayed'. The price of normalization is usually very high. In France the 'rule of Reason' ended with Thermidor and Brumaire, but it was only the Napoleonic wars and the Restoration which restored the evolutionary equilibrium. The building of the classless society—the Communist Utopia—makes the task of terminating revolutionary change in society even more difficult, particularly as the idea gives legitimacy not just to one authority but to authorities in various countries and is also the basis of an international movement. The forcible collectivization and terror under

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Stalin, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution under Mao, are just examples of the measures taken to implement Utopia through a permanent revolution. The dialectic of continuity and change has a different character in the evolutionary and revolutionary perspectives.

THE costs and the consequences of millenarian revolutions stand in striking contrast to the hopes of the revolutionary intelligentsia. It discovers in practice that it is invariably the victim of the revolution and a target for liquidation as a social group. Revolution devours not only its children, but also its fathers, and grandchildren as well, if the latter show independence of mind. Writers, who form part of this Utopia-fed intelligentsia, catch a glimpse of reality and begin writing anti-Utopias. Dreams turn into nightmares, exploitation does not disappear, oppression becomes worse than before. As to *internationalism, one only has to note the vocabulary of Sino-Soviet* polemics, listen to Radio Tirana, or meditate on the fact that the editor of the Soviet magazine, *Druzhba Narodov* (*The Friendship of Peoples*), is a militant anti-semite.[37]

When the fate of writers in revolutionary movements and the course of post-revolutionary regimes is contemplated, and the scrutiny shows that revolution has too often been an instrument of their destruction, a melancholy conclusion is forced even on those who want to remain loyal to Utopia[38]:

> We have learned that the effort to force men into Utopia leads to barbarism, but we also know that to live without the image of Utopia is to risk the death of imagination. Is there a path for us, a crooked path for men of disciplined hope?

Others still believe in *la fécondité de l'Utopie*[39]: 'L'Utopie ce n'est pas le malheur, mais ce n'est pas plus le mensonge ou l'illusion'.

Obviously, for a certain type of political imagination, to attack Utopias is, as Thomas Molnar remarked, about as meaningful as to denounce dreams. This is particularly true for the revolutionary fundamentalists who hate reality so much that, like some Italian 'new revolutionaries', they now contemplate an 'apocalyptic strategy' in order to bring about their Utopian dream. We have thus a mini-Utopia for the moderates and a maxi-Utopia for the radicals.

But in an age when 1984 and Doomwatch loom on the horizon the problem is not to rescue Utopia but to rescue humanity from the consequences of the Utopian approach to politics. This does not imply

[37] Cf. the speech by Grigorii Svirsky at the meeting of the Moscow writers in 1965 (reproduced in *Le Monde*, 28–29 April 1968) and his *Letter to the Friends* distributed by *samizdat* in November 1971 which will appear in *Survey*.

[38] Irving Howe, 'What's the Trouble?', *Dissent*, October 1971, p. 471.

[39] Jean Daniel, 'L'Avènement de l'Utopie', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 January 1972. The statement about *la fécondité de l'Utopie* echoes Malraux' remark, made in 1935, that 'le communisme rend à l'individu sa fertilité'.

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the death of imagination; the imagination can be exercised in many different ways. 'The principle of hope' does not have to be identified with revolution, as it has been by Ernst Bloch. Indeed, it requires an effort of imagination to see how to dissociate the two in a period of renewed revolutionary romanticism and of the adolescent inanities of the 'new revolutionaries'. The Ecclesiast says that 'without vision, the people perish'. This is true, but we also know that with too much vision people perish too. A contemporary seer should be chastened by past experience of the political implementation of the myth of salvation, whether in its religious or secular form, and by the thought that it can now be combined with modern technology and modern methods of control. If it is true that, as Max Weber said, 'all historical evidence confirms the truth that man would not have attained the possible, unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible', it is also true that 'the impossible' must now be defined in less Utopian terms, or, what amounts to the same thing, that the concept of Utopia must be radically redefined in line with our experience of its implementation. Does it mean banning the ideal for the sake of the real? Not necessarily. Humanity still consists and will always consist of both Don Quixotes and Sancho Panchas; a political philosophy or literary vision which excludes one or the other would itself be utopian. But at different times different types of vision possessed a different inspirational quality and credibility. In our own time, unlike the time of Thomas More, Utopia is no longer credible for the politically mature; it inspires only the politically immature. Campanella wrote in *City of the Sun* that 'the whole world has gone mad', and Herbert Marcuse echoes him by writing about the contemporary 'explosion of insanity'. But Campanella also proposed to build seven walls around his City (in Berlin they have only one) to protect the virtue of its subjects, while Marcuse writes about 'liberation' and the end of 'repression'. Clearly, as a minimum condition, the definition of sanity for the redefined Utopia must be different from the one offered by Campanella, Marcuse, or R. D. Laing.

It is sometimes argued that in order to preserve Utopia it is necessary to preserve illusions, that, as Sorel said, 'the future belongs to those who have not yet lost their illusions'. But synthetic illusions, like synthetic myths, are not credible, as Sorel discovered with his own brand of synthetic myth. If it is to inspire, a hope must be authentic and not rest on an artificially induced optimism conditioned by the suppression of historical experience. But the future has indeed belonged, in a certain sense and for a certain time, to those who had not lost their illusions, and whom Sorel admired as inspired by myths: communists and fascists. This is precisely the kind of future which those who want to retain hope not based on illusion have every reason to fear. Writers who, as past experience of their involvement in revolutionary movements testifies, often combine a mythopoeic predisposition with political naïveté, should be on guard against this type of seductive

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reasoning. The fate of their colleagues who adopted the revolutionary myth should be a warning against any attempt to rationalize it again and to perpetuate it by a self-willed illusionism.

This may not affect the fate of literature itself, which is a sturdy plant, but it may affect the fate of the writers themselves and, no mean consideration, of humanity itself. Great literature can come out of great suffering, but Solzhenitsyn is not an argument for the existence of concentration camps. Writers who avoided unnecessary illusions and casuistic self-deception would help to make 1984 a non-apocalyptic year.

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From 'Dreams of Reason' to 'Dreams of Unreason'

Juan López-Morillas

UTOPIA is a subject of interest for a number of disciplines: history, philosophy, politics, sociology, and literature; and it has been making the rounds of those disciplines for centuries without finding a suitable resting place in any of them. There is nothing strange about this. Since Utopia is an idea of human life, in principle it embraces the whole of that life and is, therefore, susceptible of study from any of the cardinal points of human curiosity. Now, beginning with Plato, who offered us a version of the ideal society in his *Republic*, and in particular since Thomas More, who christened his own in 1516 with the specific name of *Utopia*, imaginary communities have been conceived of primarily as *political* groupings—city in Plato, island in More, world in Bellamy—which, according to the metaphor implicit in the verb 'to govern', follow a course plotted by the rational conception of man and the world.

Aristotle was right, therefore, when he included his own view of the ideal community in the *Politics*. Every rational Utopia—and most of those written up to the end of the eighteenth century, and even a few later ones, are rational—could easily be included in a treatise on politics, so long as that treatise is not considered as self-sufficient, but as a mere fragment of a philosophical anthropology. What is usually called today a 'classic Utopia' is the offspring of rational thought, and is fully intelligible only when it is viewed within the context of rationalist premises, notions, and illusions. And since to speak of anti-Utopia means to contend, at least in part, with clearly irrational ways of thinking about and experiencing reality, perhaps we had better begin, even at the risk of distortion through simplification, by describing the type of thought that gave rise to the 'classic Utopia'.

THE simplest definition which can be offered of the 'classic Utopia' is this: 'a commonwealth created and governed by reason, and based on the proposition that man is a rational being'. The builder of Utopias begins by turning his back on sense experience and historical evidence, or at most takes them into account to point out those things which *are*, but which *ought not to be*. Experience provides him with a vast amount of confused and deceptive data; history shows him a de-

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pressing parade of human follies. The builder of Utopias replaces experience and history by a structure of ideas, cut and assembled according to a preconceived pattern and immune to the corrosive action of time and space. To the ' impurity ' of life he contrasts the ' purity ' of reason, and this ' purity ' supports a whole world of superlatives which, expressly or tacitly, characterize the rational view of the world: man *can be* superlatively human, beauty superlatively beautiful, justice superlatively just. The ' classic Utopia ', therefore, is born of discursive thought, which erects in the void, *more geometrico*, superlative structures whose grandeur and solidity will not be shaken by any irreverent comparison with everyday reality.

In the ' classic Utopia ' man, after a long and painful odyssey through the world of accident and contingency, discovers that he is an essentially rational incarnation, an individualized manifestation of the Universal Intelligence, and that in the measure in which he thinks, feels, and wills rationally he is free of the constrictions of time and place. His primary task is to safeguard his rationality, avoiding the traps into which his reason may fall. Now, since the chief cause of human error and imperfection lies in the subsoil of reason, in the murky area of instinct and passion, the builder of Utopias must try to extirpate, or at least neutralize, the sub-rational elements of the human psyche. In the ' classic Utopia ' religion, if indeed it still exists, will be a vague deism, innocent of zeal, self-denial, or mystery, and free from the taint of original sin; laws will be benevolent, and their goal will be to instruct men in the knowledge and practice of the good—that is, of reason—rather than to punish evildoing—that is, ignorance; political organization will be a true commonwealth, in which the individual will cheerfully accept institutions and practices rationally established to assure the common welfare; art will seek serenity and harmony, qualities which, expressed in rational symbols, will help illustrate and reinforce social stability. The intelligible world, in short, will have achieved its maximum actualization in the world of the senses.

The ' classic Utopia ' tries to justify itself by claiming that it is in perfect agreement with the ' natural order '; more concretely, with man as he exists in a state of innocence and with the world as it exists in a state of paradise. Thomas More assures us, for example, that the virtue of his Utopians stems from the fact that they live ' in accord with Nature ', and that with Nature as his guide man inevitably achieves happiness, for ' Nature compels men to seek pleasure as the goal of all activity '. This identification of the ' natural order ' with happiness, and of happiness with pleasure, is a feature of most Renaissance Utopias and does much to soften the austere view of life which would result from a strict correlation of the ' natural order ' and the ' rational order '. Every Utopian creation wishes to put an end to man's ' denaturalization ', to the life of anguish, misery, and terror which has been his lot ever since the gates of Paradise closed behind him—that Paradise which is the mythical counterpart of the ' natural order '.

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In a 'classic Utopia', the responsibility taken away from the individual is entrusted to a small group of guardians or overseers farsighted enough to anticipate and eliminate any possible conflict. Untrammelled by concern for his present and future condition, the individual can give himself entirely to the satisfaction of his spiritual and material wants. After the long ascetic experience of the Middle Ages, the world of the senses beckons with all its promises of wonder and delight. It is not strange, therefore, that a hedonistic ethic arises which equates happiness with pleasure and defines the aim of life as the pursuit of pleasure. More's Utopians spend their time eating, drinking, making love, reading, attending lectures, and listening to music. In the Abbey of Thélème, an imaginary monastery where rules are exactly the opposite of those in real-life monasteries, its denizens spend their lives, as Rabelais tells us, 'according to their free will and pleasure. . . . The only rule of the house was: *Do as thou wilt*'. In Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Gonzalo imagines a commonwealth where there would be 'no occupation; all men idle, all;/ And women too, but innocent and pure . . ./All things in common nature should produce/Without sweat or endeavour'. But even when the pursuit of pleasure is not painted in such vivid colours, as in Campanella's *City of the Sun* or Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Utopia remains essentially a place from which danger, material need, evil, individual responsibility, and fear of the future have been eliminated—in short, a place where reason and nature have combined to make of life an invariably joyous experience.

'CLASSIC Utopias' have the common feature of being stable societies, in which some imperfection must occasionally be dealt with, but ordinarily so slight an imperfection that it does not affect the solidity and permanence of the total structure. They are ahistorical entities, 'dreams of reason' woven by the theoretical mind as a counterweight to the vices and shortcomings of the real world. Thomas More himself acknowledges this when he states that 'there are many things in the community called Utopia which I desire, rather than expect, to see adopted by our governments'. It should be noted that the 'natural order' so often cited by the Utopians is as abstract, after all, as the 'human nature' which creates it. It would be useless, we need hardly say, to try to find the perfect citizen of the perfect city, eternally good, just, and happy. The inventors of Utopia know this, but prudently declare, as does Kant, that even though the idea is unrealizable at present, it will surely be realized at some future time. Utopia, therefore, becomes Uchronia, which is after all the same thing, for every rational Utopia is a Uchronia and it is hard to imagine the one without the other.

But even during Kant's lifetime there are signs of change in the intellectual and moral climate, a change resulting from a new view of reason which is at once pragmatic and militant. According to this view,

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mankind's search for happiness can be satisfied only through the complete victory of reason over unreason, of knowledge over ignorance. This view of reason has little to do with the faculty of discovering the universe of pure essences, the perfection and permanence of that ideal world of which the real world is and forever will be an imitation or counterfeit. Reason now becomes both a weapon and a tool—a weapon with which to destroy a world of outworn dogmas, beliefs and practices, and a tool with which to build another world more in agreement with the demands of human happiness. This pragmatic and militant rationalism is professed with greater or lesser fervour by Fontenelle and Montesquieu, Diderot and Voltaire, Adam Smith and Hume, and many others.

However, the proponents of pragmatic rationalism—or at least the most prominent among them—were no revolutionaries, even though their doctrines did much to justify the French Revolution, the 'rationalist revolution' *par excellence*. They were evolutionaries, gradualists, who preached the possibility of rebuilding the world through the humanizing power of education. They believed that man is a tangle of vices and defects, but that he is so not through his own nature, much less as the inheritor of the stigma of original sin, but rather through the corrupting influence of society and history, joint artificers of the depraved world in which he lives. If man is to recover his genuine humanity he must begin by removing the cobwebs from his eyes, so that he may see clearly into the world around him and understand the degree to which he has become the unwitting victim of age-long perversions. In eighteenth-century pedagogy, *culture* and *nature* are treated as complementary, a reaction against the previous tendency to contrast them. *Culture* is the discovery and elaboration of *nature*, of what man *is* before historical and social institutions strip him of his essential humanity. Many eighteenth-century thinkers—Voltaire, Locke, Condillac, Hume, Condorcet—and two outstanding pedagogues—Pestalozzi and Froebel—share this notion. And even an intuitionist like Rousseau profits after his own manner from this orientation, eliminating its aristocratic features and making it the foundation of modern education. Either tacitly or expressly, these men hold the view that education is the only means of forging a *new man*, more 'human' than that other man who for centuries has crawled painfully along the road of history; and only a new man can be expected either to improve or reject the institutions responsible for his present predicament. There is nothing surprising, therefore, about the fact that confidence in the humanizing efficacy of education reaches a high level when, at the end of the eighteenth century, pragmatic reason moved in the direction of the so-called *useful* disciplines (political science, economics, technology, legislation, etc.), since they are the disciplines that most directly contribute to the improvement of the human lot, an improvement understood as the methodical cultivation of the intellectual, ethical, and physical powers of the individual. The Utopias written after the French Revolution reflect in some measure the

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economic and social changes brought by the Industrial Revolution. All such Utopias are imbued with the idea of *Progress*, which had been glimpsed before but only now achieves general currency, based on a view of history as the record of man's slow but continuous journey toward self-realization and happiness.

During the nineteenth century 'classic Utopia', while still clinging to its rational character, becomes dynamic and revolutionary as it tries to keep pace with the rapid expansion of scientific knowledge and the technical control of the physical environment which that expansion makes possible. No one expresses this new 'dream of reason' better than Condorcet, when he asks in the Tenth Epoch of his *Esquisse*: 'Is it not possible to suppose that the human race will be improved by new discoveries in the sciences and the arts, and, as an inescapable consequence, in the means of individual and general prosperity; by subsequent progress in the principles of conduct and in moral practice; and, finally, by the real enhancement of our faculties—moral, intellectual, and physical—which may result either from the improvement of the instruments which heighten the power and guide the exercise of those faculties or from the improvement of our natural organization itself?' Not long afterwards Saint-Simon transforms these hopes into an urgent call to the creative elite, bidding it assume the task of directing human destinies and opening the portals of happiness. The men who made the Revolution of 1789, says Saint-Simon, should have realized that 'the scientists, artists, and leaders of industrial enterprises are the men who should be endowed with administrative power, that is, with the responsibility for ministering to the national interests; and that the functions of government should be confined to the preservation of the public order.' The House of Solomon, which Bacon had made the hub of his New Atlantis, is revived as a programme of action in Saint-Simon, who might well have said, in the words of his English precursor, that the end pursued by 'knowledge of causes and secret motions of things' is precisely 'the effecting of all things possible'.

The ingredients of technological Utopias—and, by inversion, of anti-Utopias (Bellamy, Hertzka, Wells, in the former category; Wells himself, Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, in the latter)—are latent in Saint-Simon's idea of a society in which 'politics', conceived as a cockpit of selfish interests and passions, gives way to 'administration', that is, to the steering function of a minority whose wisdom, expertise, and foresight, based on an uncompromising humanism, will promote the general wellbeing. This, of course, is not the only way in which social Utopia looks at the future. We also find theorists who attempt to compensate for the primacy which rational Utopia assigns to the intellect by a reverent cultivation of man's sensorial and sentimental endowments; thus, for example, Fourier, who seeks the 'harmonious development' of the human individual in the 'gradation of pleasures which our senses will receive when a material regeneration of the race lifts the senses to

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the highest degree in their inner harmony'. This, by the way, anticipates the *eupsychias* so much in vogue in our own day.

Utopian thought, which after all is a reflection of humanity's desire for wellbeing and tranquillity, has survived the most arduous tests of modern history. It is only fairly recently that wars, epidemics, famines, revolutions, in short, the constant spectacle of human misery, have dented the polished surface of the rational world-view. From the French Revolution to the first world war, hope of a better future continues to thrive despite the calamitous events that take place between those two dates: the revolutions of 1848, the Crimean War, the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, the Russian pogroms, the Boer War, etc., etc. The evidence of history is counterbalanced by the fervour of theory. Comte and the early Renan, Marx and Spencer, accept in principle the idea of Progress, justifying it in various ways and removing the image of eventual happiness to a more or less remote future, according to prescriptions which owe more to fantasy than to logic. J. B. Bury has shown how this *idea* eventually becomes a *belief*, a shift which is apparent in some of the most notable scientists of the period. Darwin himself, whose theory of evolution is ambiguous with regard to the idea of Progress, echoes the reigning optimism when he writes at the end of *The Origin of Species*: 'As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Cambrian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection.' This amounts to saying that Darwin, like any other man, has recourse to wishful thinking when his theory does not offer a clear promise of hope or consolation.

THE literary forms into which Utopia has been cast throughout its history deserve some consideration. To begin with, Utopia is *fiction* in the most literal sense of the term. If it were no more than this, it could be studied as a simple thematic variant of narrative prose. But Utopia *is* more than this: it is fiction written to present and illustrate a particular doctrine. As such, it is an equivocal creation which seeks to marry logical thought to poetic imagination, a union which has brought more than one feeble and deformed offspring into the literary world. In Utopias, and less frequently in anti-Utopias, the doctrinal and poetic elements coexist without achieving, save in rare cases, an aesthetic synthesis.

Generally speaking the 'classic Utopia', beginning with Thomas More, combines the dialogue (owing to Plato's prestige among Renaissance humanists) with elements drawn from the 'extraordinary voyage', of which the *cartas de relación* of the navigators and conquistadors of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century are an example:

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Columbus, Vespucius, Cortez, etc. The clear separation of these two forms in More emphasizes not only the structural difficulties offered by the subject, but also the tacit abandonment of any attempt to solve them. Doctrine is the stuff of the dialogue and imagination that of the voyage, for the accounts of those who returned, marvelling, from far-off lands provided sufficient food for fantasy. Though less clearly than in More, the same pattern is common to Campanella, Bacon, Foigny, Cyrano de Bergerac, etc., all of them Utopian writers who make use of a simple, almost puerile account of travels to provide a setting for their ideal community, prudently located beyond the accessible limits of the *oecumene*: islands lost in the immense Pacific, or in *Terra Australis*, a country in the heart of Africa, and, in the case of Cyrano de Bergerac, no less than the Sun and the Moon.

But the attempt, however clumsy, to combine logic and imagination reveals the desire of the 'classic Utopians' to avoid in so far as possible unadorned political and social indoctrination. Owing to their archetypal character there is a strong element of irony in the 'classic Utopias', for the author's intention is obvious: to show, in contrast to his ideal pattern, the aberrations of present society. The irony is all the more sharp when the distance between idea and reality is greatest. And when the distance is enormous, as in the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels* or Cyrano de Bergerac's *The Other World*, we are clearly in the domain of social and political satire. It must be observed that, in addition to the intentional irony implicit in almost every 'classic Utopia', there is another, involuntary, irony which results, as Northrop Frye has pointed out, from the fact that 'what is a serious Utopia for its author, and to many of its readers, could be read as a satire by a reader whose emotional attitudes were different.' This discrepancy between intention and effect appears most clearly in the 'scientific Utopia', where the author foresees technical advances which technology itself soon converts into laughable anachronisms.

Dialogue in the manner of Plato; extraordinary voyage, as a rule; rarely, a philosophical tale: these are the literary trappings with which the 'classic Utopia' is generally clothed, in an attempt to avoid the less attractive forms of the treatise, sermon, or tract; and it would be well to add that, in each of these forms, Utopia reflects current literary fashions. Most Utopias make difficult reading, and their interest is much less for the student of literature than for the historian of ideas. Many of them repeat with small variations the pattern established by More: the European voyager who, out of sheer adventure or as the result of a shipwreck, arrives at a remote and heretofore undiscovered island, where he finds a benign, tolerant, and happy society, governed according to the dictates of reason. On his return he recounts his adventures and draws explicit conclusions from a comparison between the country he has visited and his own, or leaves the comparison to the reader.

With these materials, no matter how their details are worked out, the interest of such Utopias is limited. And the worst of it is that, given

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the seriousness with which writers of ' classic Utopias ' habitually endow their imaginings, variations of tone are minimal and the general effect is that of an austere monotony. When monotony is avoided, as in the satirical Utopias of Swift, Cyrano, and Voltaire, we find another sort of literary Utopia in which, although the author rejects the society in which he lives, he does not take seriously the society offered as a substitute. The satirical Utopia is anti-Utopia *avant la lettre*. It offers in embryo many of the ingredients which we find in later anti-Utopias. The writers of satirical Utopias accentuate as much as possible the moralistic nature of their creations, more out of an *a priori* conviction that man and society are incorrigible than by appealing to what history might adduce in support of their own pessimism. Growth of the historical sense and the chance intervention of some catastrophic event will suffice to shake man's confidence in human perfectibility and tinge that pessimism with despair, converting the millenium into an apocalypse.

IT is the growth of the historical sense since the late eighteenth century that tends to emphasize the specific, idiosyncratic elements in human affairs by paying more attention to what they suggest in themselves than to how they might be fitted into a preconceived metaphysical or moral structure. To this growth we owe, among other things, the birth and development of the modern novel. By subordinating essence to existence, idea to time, the nineteenth-century novel acquires the form and sense of history. Moreover, by assuming that there is nothing enigmatic about inner and outer reality, that man can understand both through the adequate use of his senses, it takes over the analytical methods of experimental science and seeks to become a method of knowledge as rigorous, if not as rigid, as that of scientific research.

The modern novel promises to make Utopia more flexible. To begin with, to *historicize* means, paradoxically, to *futurize*, and this agrees with both socio-political millenarianism and the idea of Progress, notions strengthened in the nineteenth century by the growing historical sense. It becomes more and more difficult for Utopia to be located in the present, in some unknown corner of the planet, for by this time the *oecumene* is too well explored to offer such surprises. Consequently, Utopia has to make the leap into a more or less distant future, or to worlds less hospitable than the Earth. But localization in space now becomes less meaningful than localization in time, because—and this is important—the future, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, was ceasing to be a rosy dream and was beginning to look like a nightmare. There is no doubt that the period's social and political upheavals produced an atmosphere of apprehension and uncertainty; and the event which delivered a severe blow to hopes of redemption was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

For in 1870 the two most advanced countries on the European continent, both of them contributors to the rational interpretation of man,

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became enmeshed in a bloody conflict, the result of greed, pride, lust for power, hate, all the evil appetites, in short, that seethe under the surface of reason. And the trauma produced by the conflict led many persons to face up to the human shortcomings which a fatuous optimism had tried to conceal. Is man indeed the rational creature he pretends to be? Can it really be said that he is becoming morally better? And if the evidence of history provides a negative answer, what future awaits him? For many people, spiritually unhinged by the war of 1870, the reply could only be negative: Man is rational only in a minimal degree; he is not progressing morally, but perhaps quite the opposite; and the future will probably bring with it forms of inhumanity that will make past examples look tolerable by comparison. As a result of this psychological rebound the optimism of Utopia is replaced, in large measure, by the pessimism of anti-Utopia. Anti-Utopia is, in a word, the epilogue written by man's disappointment to the long tale of human illusions.

Anti-Utopianism finds its best expression in the novel, because the modern novel can embrace *all* experience. Unlike Utopia, where the ideal commonwealth is only a small part of humanity in a single place on the planet, anti-Utopia tends to take in the whole world. This global view is a result of the ecumenical temper of nineteenth-century social utopianism, itself a result of the unifying and levelling character of technology and the regimentation implicit in an advanced industrial system. But anti-Utopia also attempts to base itself on a generic idea of man, on a *constant* immune from time and space. What in Utopia had been the regulatory faculties of reason and the natural order become in anti-Utopia the disturbing impulses of irrationalism and subconscious appetites. Dostoyevsky, reacting against the Utopian dreams of his youth, gives expression through his Underground Man to what may be the psychological root of anti-Utopianism: 'There is one case, one only, when man may consciously, purposely, desire what is injurious to himself, what is stupid, very stupid—simply in order to have the right to desire for himself even what is very stupid and not to be bound by an obligation to desire only what is sensible.' Freudian psychology further reinforces the view that man is rational only partially and fitfully, and that, besides, reason is a neutral agent and does not guarantee that the constructions to which it leads will necessarily promote individual and collective happiness. Such is the diagnosis of man which has found its way into the anti-Utopian novel ever since Samuel Butler wrote his *Erewhon* in 1872, shortly after the Franco-Prussian War and the bloody repression of the Paris Commune.

KINGSLEY AMIS has called *Erewhon* 'the first modern Utopian romance', a description that is accurate only if 'Utopian' is changed to 'anti-Utopian', since Amis goes on to say that 'it anticipates Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*', and these works can hardly be considered as desirable Utopias. The inversion in the title is symbolic of

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the inversion undergone by the subject, for Butler offers us inverted traits of Victorian England to show us that 'inverted reality' is no more grotesque than 'real reality'. Or at least so it seems at first sight, for if we look more closely the moral world of Erewhon turns out to be exactly that of contemporary England, stripped of its mask of cant and hypocrisy. The Erewhonians preach and applaud the conformity which the English practice and censure. 'Colleges of Unreason', courses on 'Hypothetics', chairs of 'Inconsistency' and 'Evasion' have their equivalents under more conventional names in the real world. The Goddess Ydgrun openly adored by the Erewhonians is simply the Mrs Grundy whom the English secretly obey. The 'Musical Banks' convert into worthless paper the adulterated values of the established Church. In short, Butler's intention is to demonstrate that the social fabric, in so far as it is historical, is a tissue of irrational usages, prejudices, hypocrisies, and fictions. And further, that culture is precisely *all this*—though not exclusively this, of course—and has little to do with the creation *ex nihilo* of Crystal Palaces.

One aspect of *Erewhon* which is still of interest today, when the rest of the work seems outdated, is the 'Book of the Machines', a sort of interpolated narrative in which Butler vents his satire on those who think of mechanical progress as the magic key which will open the gates of happiness to man. There are no machines in Erewhon except for a few on display in a museum. Five hundred years before Higgs' visit there had been an attempt to show that machines were on the way to becoming man's masters instead of his servants, after which, as a logical development, they would supplant him. For, as one of the machines' adversaries asked, 'Is it not plain that the machines are gaining ground upon us, when we reflect on the increasing number of those who are bound to them as slaves, and of those who devote their whole souls to the advancement of the mechanical kingdom?' A civil war between proponents and opponents of machines, in which half the population of the country perished, decided the question in favour of the latter, and all existing machinery was destroyed.

H. G. Wells' view of mechanical progress is more ambiguous, reflecting his overall ambivalence about the future of mankind. Wells represents a watershed in the history of Utopia. On the one hand he is the culmination of the Utopian ideas of eighteenth-century pragmatic rationalism, reinforced by the socio-political Utopianism and Darwinism of the nineteenth century, much of which is based on the premise that advanced technology will free man from harsh and degrading labour and make possible a life in which he can realize his spiritual potential. 'Science stands,' he writes, 'a too competent servant, behind her wrangling under-bred masters, holding out resources, devices, and remedies they are too stupid to use. And on its material side a modern Utopia must needs present these gifts as taken, and show a world that is really abolishing the last base reason for anyone's servitude or inferiority.'

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Hence, if humanity frees itself from its age-old folly and at last understands the possibilities within its grasp, it can aspire to see 'a world fairly and righteously at peace, its resources husbanded and exploited for the common good, its every citizen freed not only from servitude but from ignorance, and its surplus energies directed steadfastly to the increase of knowledge and beauty'.

But counterbalancing this hopeful Wells, there is the apprehensive Wells, who writes stories like *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *A Story of the Days to Come*, anti-Utopias in which he includes many of the elements later found in the dismal visions of Capek, Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell: the enormous city, the obliteration of private life, the disappearance of the family, the degradation of the working class, the use of 'kine-tele-photography' and 'babble machines' for propaganda, pleasure cities, euthanasia, and mental surgery. The dual image projected by Wells is an indication of his contradictory vision of the future: and we say 'the future' because it is Wells himself who makes Utopia and anti-Utopia *post-historical*; that is, his fantasies often develop in the wake of some future catastrophe which, by destroying this world, makes it possible to create another. A convert to the 'cosmic pessimism' he learned from T. H. Huxley, Wells is convinced that man, in so far as his *ethical* evolution is concerned, will never succeed in subjugating the savage instincts conferred on him by his *cosmic* evolution; and, horrified by the conclusions to which this premise leads, he leaps over it, as it were, creating worlds of plenitude and felicity with the desperate optimism of a latter-day child of the Enlightenment.[1] In short, Wells seeks in fantasy what he does not find in reason.

For several decades now it has been fashionable to make fun of Wells and to dismiss as 'crass Wellsianism' any optimistic view of the future. All the same, some twentieth century anti-Utopians have imitated certain key features in Wells' fantasies. This gives their stories a certain family resemblance which is sharpened when we realize that the imitators have occasionally also imitated each other. State despotism, social regimentation, advanced technology, uniformity of behaviour, philistinism, horror for the natural, eradication or perversion of history: these are common traits of what Kingsley Amis calls 'new maps of Hell', most of which have a common ancestor in Wells.

LIKE those of Utopian writers, anti-Utopian creations respond to the need to defend certain basic human values—personal freedom, integrity, dignity, moral responsibility, tolerance—whose disappearance is felt to be imminent, either under the all-pervading pressure of mass society and the levelling action of technology, or under the more specific pressure of totalitarian political structures which impose general con-

[1] For this interpretation of Wells and for his significance and influence as a Utopian and an anti-Utopian writer I am indebted to Mark R. Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (New York, 1967).

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formity and demand unconditional obedience. Anti-Utopias are ironic in a different sense from Utopias. Utopias, as a rule, look forward from a world in which those basic human values are still in force—though very imperfectly, to be sure—to a future world in which they will be fully operative; anti-Utopias look back from a future world in which those values have completely vanished to a past world in which they still existed, even though imperfectly. In both cases, however, the authors of imaginary societies are obeying an imperative of *human wholeness*, no matter what particular meaning they attribute to such a concept.

It is difficult to describe with precision the character of the best-known twentieth century anti-Utopias. All of them are satires in a sense, either social, cultural, or political, but the proportion in which those elements are combined is different in each. In Capek and Aldous Huxley the dominant note is the repugnance felt by those writers for the contemporary world in general. The common denominator of *R.U.R.* and *Brave New World* is, as in *Erewhon*, suspicion of the machine and of its alleged promise of a new order in which man, liberated by his 'too competent servant', will at last achieve the fullness of life.

In Capek especially, the agent of anti-Utopia is fear of the machine, or more precisely the belief that man's ever-growing dependence on his mechanical aids is the cause of his current demoralization, his feeling of superfluity, and his spiritual degradation. In his play *R.U.R.* Capek depicts a society in which all labour is performed by automata called *robots*. As Domin, manager of the factory which produces them, declares in a moment of optimism, 'Within ten years the robots will produce so much of everything that things will have almost no value. Everyone can take whatever he wants. There will be no poverty . . . Everyone will live solely to perfect himself.' And so humankind is on the eve of the Golden Age and will become 'the aristocracy of the world . . . , fed by millions of mechanical slaves. Men without limitations, perfect men'. All goes well until the robots realize their irresistible power and rebel, intending to destroy man or make him a slave in a robot civilization. Only then a frightened and wiser Domin is forced to admit that 'humanity will never come to an understanding with the robots and . . . will be overcome by a flood of these horrible living machines; man will be their slave, we will live at their mercy'. Capek's novel *War With the Newts* again uses the theme of the robots, with the difference that this time it is an 'organic robot', an amphibian salamander who is imitative, intelligent, and has a communal organization. The newt's chief quality is that he is 'a born technician . . . ; his technical ability and genius for organization—writes an observer—are developing in him under our eyes so quickly and so successfully that we should regard it as one of the marvels of Nature . . . ; the time perhaps can be envisaged when in technical genius he can excel man himself . . .' And that time, in fact, arrives. The newts, whom man has entrusted with all sorts of undersea projects, create under the ocean's surface a civiliza-

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tion which is a copy of the human one: enormous cities, industrial complexes, extensive communication networks. The robots, to be sure, do not have music or literature, but they manage very well without these superfluous frills. Their interests are purely scientific and technical. The result is not hard to predict. When the newts tire of being exploited and trampled by man they rise against him, blow up the continents, and take over the world.

Capek's broad satirical vision takes in the main features of the world between the two great wars: capitalism, communism, fascism, racism, science, religion, the press, the intellectuals, etc., etc. However, it would be a mistake to examine the work only from the viewpoint of its themes. What Capek is at pains to emphasize is the mixture of fatuousness and madness, of hypocrisy and horror, of sentimentality and barbarity, which characterizes contemporary Western civilization: in short, the *quality of life* during those 20 years, a fitting prelude to the terrors that were to come.

Huxley's satirical vision of the *quality of life* in a Utopia already 'achieved' springs from a rejection of contemporary civilization not unlike Capek's. In *Brave New World* he depicts a future commonwealth turning round an axis whose two poles are Ford and Freud. By contrasting what is rational creation and instinctive impulse in man, Huxley finds the distortion he needs to anchor his fantasy in the present and develop it in the future. For despite their apparent polarization, Fordianism and Freudianism share—if an obvious exaggeration may be permitted—the characteristic of being, each in its own way, non-human: one represents the soulless, efficient, all-powerful machine forged by cold intellect; the other emphasizes the mere biological appetite in man, his primary impulse, his spontaneous vitality, in short, what is animal in him. Hence, at each end of the spectrum the human being becomes something unrecognizable: on one side the beast, on the other the automaton. Huxley shows how the Controllers of the brave new world use the beast to support the automaton and the automaton to subdue the beast. The humanist can come into such a world only to certify the abolition of man; for if one can imagine a world without God, love, fear of death, sense of individual destiny, freedom, family, poetry, art, science, and so on, one can imagine what is literally unimaginable, though not necessarily impossible.

To write an anti-Utopia in a country which officially proclaims itself to be on the road to Utopia is a rash undertaking; but it was in fact the undertaking of Evgeny Zamyatin, whose novel *We*, written in 1920-21, has not yet been published in the Soviet Union. *We* reflects, on the one hand, the influence of Wells (to whom Zamyatin dedicated an admiring essay)[2] and in its turn has influenced Orwell's *1984* and possibly *Brave*

[2] For Wells' influence on Zamyatin see E. J. Brown, 'Zamyatin and English Literature', *American Contributions to the Fifth International Congress of Slavists: Sofia, 1963*, Vol. II (The Hague, 1964), pp. 37–39.

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New World. It betrays the disillusionment suffered by its author when he realizes that the hopes of freedom generated by the October Revolution have gradually been replaced by repressive dogmatism and strict regimentation. It has been said that Zamyatin did not write his novel as a direct criticism of the Soviet State and society, and that his aim was to show the effects of mass society on the individual eager to preserve his personal identity and moral responsibility. But Zamyatin, a rebellious and dissatisfied man, inclined to nonconformity and convinced that progress is the fruit of heresy, must have observed very early the Russian Revolution's tendency to congeal into dogma and must have personally felt the pressure to accept the New Order unconditionally. In a curious letter, apparently written in 1919, he notes that all religions pass through three stages in the course of their evolution: prophetic, apostolic, and ecclesiastic. Ostensibly referring to Christianity, he points out that in the last or ecclesiastical stage the Christians 'have conquered on the *earthly* plane. And as all conquerors, the Christians begin forcible salvation: by force, by sword, by fire, by prisons. Christ becomes the Grand Inquisitor.' [3] No great effort of the imagination is required to understand the true meaning of this comment. A. M. Shane remarks that 'As an avowed romantic, Zamyatin was interested only in the prophetic stage of any cause he championed. His ardour would cool at the apostolic stage, and attainment of the ecclesiastical stage, with its concomitant philistinism, would turn him against the very cause he had supported.' [4]

Notwithstanding the interest that can be read into the work as political commentary, its scope is much broader than this. With the slyness characteristic of satire, Zamyatin tells us that life without freedom to think, feel, speak, and act is a monstrous aberration. Paradoxically, in the Single State of the twenty-ninth century man has attained most of the objectives envisaged by the 'classic Utopia': City-State governed by a Benefactor with the assistance of a Council of Guardians, a stable and uniform society, satisfaction of all material needs, absence of conflict, regimentation of activities, and efficient utilization of time. The individual has lost his identity and with it his specific name, having been absorbed into the generic and anonymous *We* of the title ('We is from God, I from the devil'). A 'mathematically faultless happiness' reigns in that rectilinear and cubic community, the quintessence of civilization, a rational, transparent, antiseptic city protected from Nature by a glass wall, outside which a few primitive and degenerate men live in the foul and chaotic world of organic forms. Zamyatin rejects both kinds of life: the rational life of the city and the instinctual one outside the walls. Neither the geometrical entity nor the man-beast are human; they are merely components of genuine man. As E. J. Brown writes, 'Zamyatin's

[3] Cited by A. M. Shane, *The Life and Works of Evgeny Zamyatin* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1968), p. 22.
[4] Ibid. p. 22.

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point in his novel would seem to be that only through the union of the two parts could a fully human being again develop.' [5]

The most direct anti-Utopia, the one most intimately linked to a complex of political circumstances, is George Orwell's *1984*, no doubt because its author is the only one of the anti-Utopians we have been discussing—Wells included—who has been *political* both in word and deed; better still, a man who has lived, dreamed, and agonized over politics as over a person who is loved with full consciousness of his virtues and defects—chiefly the defects, for Orwell's political trajectory, lasting little more than 15 years, ranged from cautious hope to almost total pessimism, a pessimism of which *1984* is the testament. Specific disappointments contributed to it: the fragmentation and mutual rivalry of the proletarian parties during the Spanish Civil War; the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Treaty in 1939; Orwell's growing conviction that an Allied victory in the second world war would not change England's social and political structure; and, finally, the cold war, the splitting of the world into hostile blocs, each presided over by a super-power armed with weapons capable of wiping every living organism off the face of the earth. His allegiance to the socialist Left is somewhat paradoxical, since he was by temperament hostile to the ideological simplifications of pragmatic radicalism. The most characteristic traits of his life and work are love for simple people and compassion for the oppressed, with whom he became identified to the point of choosing a life of privation which, together with the wounds he received fighting for the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, undermined his health and led to his premature death. Indeed, *1984* is an epic of despair, 'a book', writes G. S. Fraser, 'written by a sick and dying man, who had never had any religious faith or hope, and who had lost for the time being the political faith and hope which served him as a religion'.

The literary influences prevalent in *1984* are not hard to identify, since Orwell himself alludes to them. Jack London's *The Iron Heel* suggests to him how capitalism can create a vast corporative state whose aim is to perpetuate itself at any cost, if necessary by assuming the guise of a spurious socialism, or by resorting to the most ferocious methods of repression. James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* convinces him that an intelligent elite can seek and hold power for power's own sake, and not necessarily to promote the general welfare. Zamyatin's *We* suggests a number of details: Big Brother, the Thought Police, love as a means of self-identification and an instrument of political non-conformity, escape into the natural world, torture of recalcitrants, re-education by brainwashing. *1984* also shares some motifs with Wells' *When the Sleeper Wakes*, but its similarity to Wells is more a matter of atmosphere than anything else: the colossal city, the anonymous, degraded, and impotent mass, the shabbiness of regimented life. Indeed, shabbiness is the dominant note of Oceania in *1984*; housing, clothes,

[5] E. J. Brown, *Russian Literature since the Revolution* (New York, 1963), p. 76.

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food, utensils, furniture, books, periodicals—everything is tawdry, of poor quality, and in short supply as well. But Orwell's real models are Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany, and the resemblance between the two in the cult of personality, monolithic single party, political police, sadism, concentration camps, regimented masses, the methodical cultivation of hatred for the state's supposed internal and external enemies, the implacable demand for submission, the perversion of language, the abolition or distortion of history.

A political novel must be judged, at least in part, by the effect it produces, which in its turn is a reflection of the timeliness of the problems it presents. In this respect the effect of *1984* has been extraordinary. The great impact of Orwell's book stems from the fact that it elaborates and extrapolates situations which almost every reader—especially if he is now in middle age—recognizes as real and not as mere illustrations of social and political hypotheses. In 1959, 27 years after the publication of *Brave New World*, Huxley found it necessary to write *Brave New World Revisited* to show what a good prophet he had been in 1932 and how reality had confirmed many of the imaginary features of his anti-Utopia. The reader of *1984* needs no such *a posteriori* confirmation, for his own despairing knowledge persuades him of the contemporaneity of the monstrous world depicted by Orwell. It is not a question of whether that world will come to pass, but of the fact that, morally and spiritually, we are already in it. We do not need to have Orwell come back to life and prove it to us in order to be convinced. We need only glance at the headlines of our daily newspaper.

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Marxist Literary Criticism Today

Peter Demetz

IN his essay on the *Deformation of Man*, the Austrian Marxist Ernst Fischer suggests that people in socialist countries take a more passionate interest in matters of art and literature than their contemporaries in the capitalist part of the world. He tells us of their serious concern for new plays and poems and maintains that in socialist countries an important new book is a real *Ereignis* while it may not create even an ephemeral impression elsewhere. I think that this is only half the truth because I am tempted to believe that a great deal of this high seriousness may stem from political concerns which may have to assume a literary guise in a society of little tolerance for spontaneity from below. Literary passion may be something of an *ersatz*-event in place of missing political acts, and a protracted discussion of a new poem may hide (as it did in Metternich's Central Europe 150 years ago) an inaudible political discourse which has to be transformed into an audible surface of literary terms. The great literary event (to stay with Fischer's phrase) may turn out to be a political signal of a particular kind but we have to know something of the code developed by writers and readers who are politically impotent in order to be able to read the message. Rather than constructing a transformational grammar of politics and literature I would like to say that much of what I hope to discuss within the confines of contemporary Marxist literary theory and criticism may be pointing to, or be derived from, realities more abrasive than pure poetry. I intend to concentrate on certain *topoi* of the critical idiom, as they emerge from the writings of prominent Marxist critics outside the Soviet Union, and on a conspectus of issues rather than individual personalities; yet I do not want to underrate the possibility that behind these literary ideas political demands are being pressed. They often speak about Kafka and mean the continuing alienation in socialist countries or the self-determination of the creative intellect.

I SPEAK of Franz Kafka because I agree with those observers of the political scene who believe that the Prague or rather the Liblice Kafka Conference in the spring of 1963 first clearly suggested the delayed consequences of the withered 'cult of personality' and indicated the tensions and conflicts among communist intellectuals ten years after Stalin's death. Little of scholarly interest was revealed in these discussions and papers but it would be totally wrong to assume that the Conference had any chance of functioning in the accustomed mode of an American philological convention or of competing with the Kafka interpretation industry

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outside the socialist sphere. It was, above all, a political signal of changes to come in the communist world, and the absence of the most noted British, West German or American Kafka specialists intensified rather than diffused the discussion of the Marxist intellectuals who were all experts in using a *Sklavensprache* (slave language), i.e. an idiom of literary allusions highly charged with striking political relevance. Outside observers may be tempted to underrate the extent to which the gothic vicissitudes of Kafka's world of irrational authorities and arbitrary trials were of living essence even to those intellectuals who had never read Kafka; and the Czech poet and critic Rio Preisner (now teaching in the USA) is surely right in suggesting that *Kafkovstina* was for his contemporaries a mode of life; if Kafka, in the first speech of the Conference, was introduced as a prominent victim of the personality cult, the intellectuals present did not need further explications. It was, in more than one sense, a matter of their guts.

But I do not believe, as do many observers in our part of the world, that the Prague Kafka Conference (or Dubcek's spring, for that matter) was unified in ideas or purpose. I make an unfashionable distinction between those communists who want to uphold their absolute monopoly of power at a certain price, and those who are willing to see the vices of power *institutionally unopposed;* and it was precisely the divergence of opinions which indicated what was to come. I would say that among the participants at the Conference there were at least three groups which represented distinctive literary and political tendencies of essential importance. These groups were not forming along generational or geographical lines (for ageing Ernst Fischer was among the young at heart and the youngest members of the East German delegation offered the most arthritic arguments) but were distinguished rather by their willingness or unwillingness to discuss fundamentals and to defend, modify, or impatiently push aside the doctrine of socialist realism. Much of the exchange between the 'traditionalists' and the 'radicals' converged on the possibility of interpreting Kafka in existentialist terms (tested and largely abandoned by criticism in the West ten years earlier) but behind the arguments the practical question emerged whether or not socialist society had been able to end man's alienation from man and to order life in a way averse to crude brutality, arbitrary degradations, and absurd irrationality. The 'radicals' were clearly arguing from a philosophy of despair over the quality of socialist life; Ivan Svitak, among others, pushed aside all sociological, i.e. historically oriented, interpretations, and praised Kafka as a writer *who penetrated to the universal foundations of being human* and, in his work, *inaugurated a philosophical literature*, rather than the realism, *of tomorrow*. On the side of the traditionalists, the East German critic Ernst Schumacher argued against such an ontological way of interpretation that would negate all possibilities of historical change: man suffers (as Kafka's stories indicate) but we do not have to accept suffering as an unchangeable mode of being, and the

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approaching triumph of communism will enable us to see Kafka in historical perspective. Any existentialist interpretation which stresses ontological qualities (that is, implies that man's terrible suffering continues in socialist countries) cannot be combined with a Marxist view. *It should not,* Schumacher frankly suggested, *be permitted to a Marxist.*

The discussion was dominated by the question of whether Kafka belonged to the past or was ever-present (i.e. whether alienation was absent or present in the socialist countries), by the issue of realism or the philosophical parable, and the potential problems of combining Marxist ideas with insights derived from the phenomenological tradition (including Heidegger), and any detailed attempt to define the strategies of the conflicting groups (which occasionally re-grouped for a particular argument) might well proceed from these points of orientation. Most members of the East German delegation and, among the Czechs, Pavel Reiman, presented traditionalist arguments in favour of the communist future revealing the 'pastness' of Kafka, and grudgingly admitted to a historical rather than 'relevant' interest in Kafka. These traditionalists encountered the articulate opposition of the young Czech philosophers Ivan Svitak and Alexej Kusak (often supported by Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy) who were inclined to stress the immediacy of Kafka's world and the importance of his formal explorations; and in his precarious tightrope act between East German traditionalists and Czech philosophers, Eduard Goldstücker circumspectly argued for the *uzemneni* of Kafka (i.e. an interpretation that would take into account his time and place) and suggested that it was Kafka's experience in Prague which enabled him to see earlier and more clearly the coming decomposition of middle class society. It would be tempting to speak of *literary* 'traditionalists', 'mediators', and 'radicals' but we know what happened in the course of the years. Schumacher later defended the foreign policy of the GDR (that is, the Czechoslovak invasion in which East German troops participated), Eduard Goldstücker was active in rehabilitating victims of political trials and modifying cultural policies (without ever doubting the necessary monopoly of Communist Party power), and Ivan Svitak came to plead the privileges of all citizens of the Republic (whether or not members of the party in power), postulated the productive conflict between contending political pressure groups, and advocated free and secret elections which, he assumed, a rejuvenated Communist Party would win. To the participants at the Kafka Conference of 1963 these incipient divergences of political attitudes were clearly encoded in the literary discussion, and, I suspect, grasped without difficulty or impediment.

I CONSIDER the Kafka Conference a kind of *ouverture* that echoes and rehearses a number of *leitmotifs* which continue to reverberate in recent theoretical discussions; and while some of these motifs had been audible long before the Conference, they there constituted a combination

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that is characteristic of Marxist literary theory in the age of opposition against Soviet hegemony and the doctrines of socialist realism. One of the fundamental *topoi* within this combination is the aversion to the metaphor of literature as mirror of society; the mirror has to be broken and literature is to assume more independent, more promising functions. Opposition to the mirror image occasionally refers to Marx and Engels, who allegedly never used this particular metaphor, but textual evidence offers a complicated problem. Marx did use the *Spiegel*-metaphor both in *Das Kapital* and in *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, and Engels followed suit in his *Anti-Dühring*, but it is true that Marx and Engels, on these occasions, discussed economics, religion, and epistemology rather than issues of literature. I suspect that the predominance of the metaphor and its allied images (including *odraz, odrazenie*, ' reflections ', etc.) relates to the rich traditions of the image (originating with Plato and the Neoplatonists), Lenin's epistemology, polemically directed against Ernst Mach, and his essay on *Tolstoy* (1908); but it is only fair to add that many of Marx's critical images (e.g. echo, reflex, sublimation) used in literary contexts are far more restrictive than the mirror image and that the later Lukacs, in his *Aesthetik*, systematically tried to substitute a new interpretation of Aristotle's *mimesis* for his obsessive concern with *Wiederspiegelung*. But in the polemics of the last decade these distinctions are blurred, and attitudes toward the mirror metaphor distinctly signal degrees of opposition to, or acceptance of, the official Soviet point of view and Georg Lukacs, whom many younger critics consider closely attached to the sources of past policies of repression and discrimination.

Roger Garaudy, Hans Mayer and Ernst Fischer, who represent an older generation of critics, try to modify or to replace the mirror metaphor in a particular way. Hans Mayer made ample use of *Spiegel* and *Spiegelung* in his Leipzig essays of the fifties, but in the sixties prefers to speak about *Verknüpfung* of the social and the literary element, and Roger Garaudy in his essay about Picasso (1963) considers art as *réflet et création* and, in his latter postcript to his essays (1966), openly attacks a concept of art *comme un miroir où se réfleterait un monde extérieur immuable*. Chronologies are of some importance: Ernst Fischer, for instance, echoed Garaudy in stressing both the reflective and the creative aspects of art in 1966 but two years later totally rejected the mirroring function, approvingly quoted the formalist Roman Jacobson and Jan Mukarovsky, and declared *art a reality sui generis*. Younger critics who have been less involved in the conflicts of the past are inclined to reject the mirror image as unhesitatingly as did Theodor Adorno long ago, and Czech and Yugoslav critics are unrelenting in revealing the implications of the mirror metaphor directed against human creativity and the dignity of art. Karel Kosik maintained (1963) that the mirror metaphor implies a documentary function of art which totally negates the artistic element; any creation to which humanity turns exclusively for documentary evidence necessarily ceases to be a work of art (*kulturni vytvor, k nemuz*

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se lidstvo obraci vyhradne jako ke svedectvi, neni dilem). Among the contributors to the Yugoslav periodical *Praxis* analogous arguments are voiced; Ivan Focht considers a mirror-theory of art simply non-Marxist: and Nikola Milosevic, in a penetrating essay on Dostoyevsky, comes to the conclusion that genius does not offer *a correct picture of life but an artistic vision which is biased in its own way*. Genius does not reproduce but grasps truth in a cognitive *distortion* of the world.

The increasing enmity towards the mirror image converges on some of its ontological implications; if literature mirrors society, it is society that tends to incarnate a higher principle of reality while reflections in literature are of lesser substance; they are, at every stage of historical development, dependent on, if not determined by, the more real impulse of the other force. The mirror image is understood as an abbreviation for a theory of literature in which the material basis fully determines the intellectual superstructure (as distinctly suggested by Marx in his *Deutsche Ideologie*), and the argument against the mirror image forms part of a strategy that wants to do away with the economic determinism of a basis/superstructure model of human productivity. It is part of a political fight for the dignity of creative man.

Among the middle and older generation, Lucien Goldmann and Ernst Fischer opt for a modification of the basis/superstructure model but Goldmann has merely succeeded in substituting one dependence for another. And Fischer, fired more by visionary enthusiasm than by methodological precision, arrives at a pattern which resuscitates something of Dilthey's philosophy. In Goldmann's view, group consciousness (most often, as he stresses, the consciousness of a social class) constitutes the *matrix* of all intellectual activity. These aspirations and ideas unite the members of a collective, separate them from others, and combine in a *vision du monde* (Goldmann too knows his Dilthey). It is precisely the fundamental achievement of the philosopher or the writer to express this *vision du monde* in argument or images. The closer and more intimately the author comes to coherently articulating what might be diffuse in the awareness of the individuals of the group, the more important his thought or imaginative writing. The poet is the delegate speaker for a collective consciousness, and his poem a *homologue* of collective thought. Much of the pattern of basis and superstructure reappears in the relationship between group consciousness and individual achievement, and I suspect that Goldmann, in his sophisticated and erudite way, offers but a camouflage version of economic determinism and strives in vain to link his theories with the nascent French structuralism of the sixties. He brilliantly fights a rear-guard action of traditionalist Marxism, and his conservative views on realism and formalism confirm that his thought is closer to that of Georg Lukacs than to that of the New Left. Ernst Fischer suggests other modifications but his ideas on the relationship of society and artist are curiously inchoate because he tries to go in two directions at once. In theory he demands an ever widening basis

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which would have its impact on an ever more independent superstructure. The basis should include modes of economic production but also technical discoveries, if not the entire life style of an epoch. At the same time, Fischer argues, extra-literary impulses affect not only the idea of a work but, above all, its language and structure, in which the *entire atmosphere of the time* may find articulation; indeed there is something in the work of art that is totally independent of social history and rather refers to an *immanent self-motion of the arts* (*eine immanente Selbstbewegung der Künste*) which the critic cannot afford to ignore. But in practice Fischer is (as he says himself) *ein alter Romantiker* and he cannot do without the creative individual. In his specific criticism, writers like Kleist and Kafka have particular experiences of human relevance, within a given constellation of social elements, and it is their privilege to express these experiences which are prophetic of the course of history. They have an *Erlebnis*, conceive of an overwhelming *Ausdruck* for their basic experience, and Fischer has come close to Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* without really sacrificing his own emphasis on social and political events.

It was the Czech philosopher Karel Kosik who, in the early sixties, most incisively argued against the model of basis and superstructure and, claiming an alliance with the young Marx, revealed the degradation of creative man implicit in economic determinism. He opposes the deterministic 'theory of factors' (*theorie cinitelu*) with an activist 'theory of economic structure' (*theorie ekonomicke struktury*), and his tense and radical discussion clearly indicates his belief that it is perverse to grant economic factors a privileged position in any account of human culture. Those thinkers, he stresses, who isolate and abstract economic causes from human creations are making a fetish of forces that have to be reintegrated with the entire field of human actions and relationships. At the centre of Kosik's world, there is active man who creates economic relationships *and* poetry, and poetry is not a realm of lesser reality than economy (*poesie neni nizsiho radu nez ekonomie*) but a human creation of equal privileges though of different forms and functions. *Economy does not create poetry*, Karel Kosik says in his central argument, *directly or indirectly, in a mediated or an unmediated way . . . Materialist philosophy cannot buttress poetry by economy or mask economy in different . . . disguises as there are politics, philosophy, art, but has to ask first of all where economy itself comes from . . . Dialectical materialism is a radical philosophy precisely because it does not accept the creations of man as last causes but penetrates to the roots of social reality, that is to man who creates all social realities.* While older Marxists continue discussing modifications of the basis/superstructure model Karel Kosik exposes both its illegitimacy and its anti-humanist core.

AVERSIONS to the mirror image and the basis/superstructure model of intellectual creativity are closely related to a fierce condemnation

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of realism as earlier demanded of contemporary writing; and Adorno's and Herbert Marcuse's opposition to socialist realism as an instrument of intellectual repression (suggested in their writing of the late fifties) is shared by almost all the younger Marxists of the sixties. Yet involvement in this particular question and the return to the theoretical discussions of before and immediately after the First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934) imply almost archaeological inclinations, and attempts to widen the definition of realism or to reverse its meaning are superseded by the distinct awareness that socialist writing is not married, by nature or history, to nineteenth century modes of narration kept alive by political authorities. In his *Réalisme sans rivages* (1963) Roger Garaudy made a resounding attempt to include Picasso, Saint John-Perse and Franz Kafka, as explorers of revolution and alienation, in a revised canon of *réalisme* acceptable to Marxist readers but, unfortunately, the title of this book alone yields a clear formulation, and the book itself is unmitigated mush. Ernst Fischer, at least in his writing of the mid-sixties, wants to eat his cake and have it too: he distinguishes between realism as method (middle class narrative of the nineteenth century) and realism as attitude, that is any successful attempt to penetrate human reality to its burning core. His realists of attitude are the romantics and the modern experimental writers because they experienced and expressed alienation before anybody else; and Fischer's catalogue of great realists of this kind exactly corresponds to that of Lukacs, only in reverse—not Balzac, but Stendhal; not Goethe, but Kleist; not Thomas Mann, but Brecht; not the writers of the great epic tradition but the restless, the driven, the tragic, and the outsiders. Younger critics do not bother to refurbish old hats any more, and pose more contemporary questions that (possibly following Walter Benjamin and Marshall McLuhan) concern the value of literature, realistic or not, in the age of the technological media. Danko Galic (*Praxis*, 1968) shifts the centre of attention and discusses the value function of art in the age of an industrialism which threatens the cosmic energies of man with relentless conformism. It is not the question of realist or experimental art any more (because we know traditional as well as technological *kitsch*); what is needed is a spark of originality, not demands upon the artist in the name of ideology or other universals. Danko Galic clearly believes that only the intense individual quality of a work of art, of whatever style or mode, may effectively counteract the dehumanizing consequences of media and machines.

The Marxist reformation invests, as any reform movement would do, considerable and productive energy in searching for allies in the recent as well as in the more distant past of socialist history. The chronicle of Marxist thought is being rewritten, and, in anthologies and critical analyses, those thinkers and critics are rediscovered and explicated, who have been barely tolerated or intentionally ignored by the Stalinist defenders of socialist realism. G. V. Plekhanov and Christopher Caudwell make their comeback in anthologies edited by Fritz Raddatz and Viktor

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Zmegac, Rosa Luxemburg and Max Raphael are reverently quoted, and the new history of Marxist thought rarely cares to hide a marked enmity to Georg Lukacs; often, the most informed arguments are articulated by young Marxists from East Germany who are writing in West Berlin for the periodical *Alternative*, and their tense bitterness shows a younger generation in open revolt against a towering father figure. In his penetrating and idiosyncratic book on *Marxistische Ideologie und allgemeine Kunstlehre* (Tübingen, 1971) Hans Dieter Sander, who was once a member of Brecht's theatrical group, at least tries to suggest that Lukacs (as did Mikhail Lifschitz) played his own oppositional game against crude cultural policies, but Sander has to admit that, in the late thirties, internal opposition had to work with such fine distinctions that it came closer to a defence of conformism than to resistance against it. Helga Gallas' first-rate study *Marxistische Literaturtheorie; Kontroversen im Bund proletarischer revolutionärer Schriftsteller* (Berlin, 1971) combines the virtues of a closely documented historical analysis with a good deal of provincial bias. If Lukacs was, in past decades, hailed as the patriarch of Marxist aesthetics and Brecht or Eisler were under a cloud, the younger restive GDR generation reverses the position and nearly everybody persecuted by Lukacs now emerges as a new culture hero, regardless of the resilience of his thought. Helga Gallas ostensibly concentrates on writing the history of the German *Bund* of proletarian revolutionary writers, established in October 1928, as the German section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (and thus as a branch of RAPP) and analyses the shifting policies of its official periodical *Die Linkskurve* (Left Turn) which, directly financed by the Moscow Bureau of International Literature rather than by funds from the German Communist Party, was published from August 1929 to the late months of 1932. Miss Gallas convincingly argues that *Die Linkskurve* for the first time in Germany attempted to define the concepts of a proletarian theory of literature in contrast to the dominant ideas of the time and shows in detail how a more progressively oriented group (one concerned with experimental forms) step by step was opposed and finally pushed aside by a more traditionalist faction which, adroitly exploiting the literary conflicts among the factions in Moscow, finally triumphed over literary experimentation and early imposed a combination of doctrinaire ideas that anticipated the repressive system of socialist realism. As it turns out, the experimentalist group within the *Bund* related to Brecht, Eisler and Walter Benjamin, while the traditionalist point of view was represented by J. R. Becher (later minister of culture in the GDR) and Georg Lukacs, who had moved in September 1931 from Moscow to Berlin. Miss Gallas demonstrates that *Die Linkskurve* was initially edited by radicals who (close to *Proletkult* ideas) hoped to establish a new literature from the contributions of the workers' correspondents in the factories and, much to the displeasure of the party organization, argued against the famous fellow travellers Toller, Tucholsky and Döblin, who were very influential in the public life of the

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Weimar Republic. By the middle of 1930, the Central Committee of the CP, possibly responding to the polemics of RAPP against the *Levyi Front,* pressed for a change of editorship and of guidelines, the middle class fellow-travellers were rehabilitated as pioneers of future communist literature, and a first long essay on Hegel's aesthetics indicated the imminent dangers to the radical faction. The Left once more gathered its energies in a fighting manifesto against the traditionalists favoured by the Central Committee and, shortly before RAPP was being disbanded in Moscow, a compromise was reached between the two groups. By mid-1932, however, Lukacs completely dominated the scene and lashed out in a series of systematic essays against experimentation, *agitprop*-forms and documentary writing. A month or so before Hitler came to power and Moscow ceased to subsidize the periodical, a double issue of *Die Linkskurve* was published, entirely devoted to fighting Brecht and formalist experiments, and anticipated the prolonged discussions of realism and expressionism which, in the late thirties, continued to split the German exiles of the Left into defenders and cautious adversaries of socialist realism.

In writing a history of the German branch of RAPP Miss Gallas actually compiles a long list of personal and theoretical grievances against Lukacs. Lukacs is accused, together with J. R. Becher, of manipulating his Moscow connexions against the Berlin radicals and implying, at a moment politically propitious to his own ideas, that Brecht's concepts were close to those of the *Levyi Front* threatened by its own adversaries in Moscow. Lukacs' unpardonable sin consists of continuing German middle class aesthetics and actively counteracting literary experimentation that takes into account the process of actual reception (Brecht's epic theatre), attempts to elaborate sophisticated 'mediations' between basis and superstructure (Eisler) and Walter Benjamin's thoughtful analyses of changing artistic production in the age of technology. Some of these objections have long been raised against Lukacs by his non-Marxist critics but it is another matter mechanically to reverse the pattern of conflict and to make Brecht, Eisler and Benjamin absolute prophets of our intellectual salvation. Many true believers are pursued by the devil but not all of them are saints.

THE brilliant historical analysis by Miss Gallas and its fundamental polemics against Lukacs demonstrate in their own way many of the difficulties that confront the younger Marxist critics today. They are faced with a massive doctrine that has been supported by massive power, and have to mobilize their best energies to fight the burdens of yesterday; and more than once their energies are spent before they turn away from the past. They triumphantly break their chains but these chains are of ancient ore, and the world outside their former prison has been long busy with different issues. It is a tortuous process of self-liberation: many are still captives of the past, and though there are first

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intimations of a new beginning (including Miss Gallas' interest in *Rezeptionsaesthetik* or the concern of the *Praxis* authors with the mass media) Marxist literary criticism of recent years only slowly turns to the contemporary concerns of linguistics, anthropology and hermeneutics. Again, I would say that Karel Kosik (at present imprisoned in Prague) may be one of the few Marxist thinkers of the decade who resolutely pushed his theoretical inquiry beyond the confines of the past; it is important to see that he systematically tries to relate the classic issues of Marxist literary theory to the most recent hermeneutic explorations. Kosik takes as his basic text Karl Marx's famous fragment of 23 August 1857, and attempts a solution of its difficulties which goes a long way towards breaking the methodological isolation of Marxist criticism. In his fragment, Marx considers the potential gaps between the historical development of the material basis and the intellectual superstructure and finds Greek art a particularly striking instance of such an *unequal relationship*. Greek art and the epics, Marx notes, *are bound to certain forms of social developments* (and yet) *provide us with artistic pleasure and in a certain sense represent for us a norm and an attainable standard.* Kosik rightly believes that Marx is *not* concerned with the standard of Greek art but with the fact that such a standard was produced by *past* social conditions; it is the difficult question of the relationship between origin (*geneze*) and validity (*platnost*). It is impossible, Kosik maintains, to answer the question by falling back on the traditional scheme of social conditions because the idea of causation cannot account for the survival of the work of art in the stream of history and for its appeal to later readers. Kosik suggests a solution of the problem by turning to a modern phenomenology of time and a hermeneutic which sees both the literary work and the reader as bound to each other in the process of history. He makes a distinction between what he calls historicity (*historicita*), that is the moment of unrepeatable birth of the work of verbal art from particular social conditions, and temporality (*historicnost*), that is the capacity of a work of art to survive the moment of its origin and to be realized again and again by different readers; it is insufficient to stress mere historicity rather than temporality, that recurrent rhythm of potential resuscitation which distinguishes the work of art from documents. The hermeneutic concept of temporality enables Kosik to argue with equal success against the bad metaphysics and the crude mechanics of the basis/superstructure model: literature is not timeless (as metaphysicians would assume) because it is realized again and again by readers within the stream of history and not above it; and it is not, as crude materialism assumes, totally bound to the historicity of its moment of birth because it continues to challenge others beside the readers of its time. But in so arguing, Kosik moves within the main stream of recent hermeneutics, develops ideas that are of importance to the philosophical tradition from Husserl to Gadamer and, in a resolute step beyond traditional Marxism (but not Marxist respect for history and active man), contributes to a productive reconsideration of the most ancient crux of historicism at large.

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The Decline of Socialist Realism

Max Hayward

EVEN in the later years of Stalin, who was a past master in aligning theory and practice, there was never a perfect congruence between the two in literature and the arts. The ragged edges of the 'practice' that occasionally peeped out from under the blueprint were ruthlessly snipped away, sometimes together with the heads of the guilty, but all the same there were anomalies—even licensed by the great Engineer of Human Souls himself—to remind one of the underlying tenuity of the doctrine. A case in point was the posthumous canonization of Mayakovsky, which was hard to square with the all-encompassing condemnation of 'formalism' in the years after the war. Such anomalies, as one can see now, were of great importance in the preservation of some vestiges of an alternative culture. The constant availability of Mayakovsky to the younger generation was a prime factor in the revival of poetry after Stalin's death—Evtushenko and Voznesensky would be unthinkable without him, in moral as well as formal terms. Various other 'undermining' influences were kept in being, despite frenetic attempts in the later Stalin years to minimize them—some from prerevolutionary times, others from the early years of the Soviet regime. It was 'awkward' to ban Dostoyevsky and Esenin,[1] though everything possible was done to limit access to them. Even so, the minds of the innocent young and the terrorized old could not be totally insulated from them and other 'harmful' voices from the past. On the whole, however, it was undeniable that by the end of Stalin's reign, the official picture of Soviet literature fitted the visible reality pretty well—though rather in the way that a shroud may be said to fit an amputated corpse.

The doctrine of 'socialist realism' was launched out of the blue in 1932 after virtually secret preparations linked with the drafting of the Statutes of the Union of Writers.[2] During the following years it took shape in several pronouncements at the highest level (by Zhdanov in his

1 Dostoyevsky was denounced in an article in *Pravda* in 1948 by the notorious Yermilov: 'Against the reactionary ideas in Dostoyevsky's writings'. (Ironically, the immediate pretext was a book by V. Kirpotin—see below—entitled *Molodoi Dostoyevsky*.) After this, none of Dostoyevsky's work was reprinted until after Stalin's death, his museum in the Bozhidomka was closed, and school textbooks of literature mentioned him only in passing as a figure of no great importance who had lapsed into obscurantism after his progressive early work *Bednye lyudi*. But he was never formally banned, so that secondhand copies of his collected works remained available—at prohibitive prices. The same was true of Esenin who became something of a cult figure in the *bas-fonds* of Soviet society in the later Stalin years. (See in this connexion the fascinating note by V. Shalamov: *Sergei Esenin i vorovskoi mir* (*Grani*, No. 77, 1970).)

2 The term was first used in print in an anonymous leading article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in May 1932. It was written by V. Kirpotin. See note to my article 'Themes and Variations in Soviet Literature' in *Fifty Years of Communism in Russia* (ed. M. Drachkovitch, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968, p. 314).

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speech to the First Writers' Congress in 1934, and then again in 1947 in his 'report' on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*) and, more importantly, through the gradual establishment of an illustrative canon which started with Gorky's *Mat* (1906) and came to include some of the prose of the twenties, adopting further works *passim* during the thirties, forties and early fifties. At first sight it was a motley collection, embracing work of very varied type and quality, but there was a certain consistency in the choice, and with the notable exception of Mayakovsky, it conformed well enough to the official theory—by the time of Stalin's death, theory and practice could be said to match in a fairly stabilized relationship with each other. Even foreigners, such as Howard Fast, Andersen-Nexö, and others, could be adapted into this canon—though the casualty rate was high. The detailed story of the elevation of foreign writers to the status of honorary socialist realists, and the subsequent 'disgrace' of some of them, is the best illustration, if any is needed, of the political opportunism to which literary theory was at all times subject.[3]

But to take it at its face value, what was socialist realism in its heyday, from about 1934 to 1953? At the risk of repeating the all-too-familiar, it may be well to attempt a summary of what now seem to have been its essential features, as a prelude to a discussion of its position at the present day.

ITS ancestry has always been a cause of some embarrassment for Soviet critics, since it is difficult to equip it with a Marxist pedigree (the 'revisionists' are more easily able to find support for their arguments in favour of the autonomy of art in the writings of Marx and Engels), and they had to seek justification for it mainly in the views of nineteenth-century radical critics, in particular Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov, who are an abundant source of quotations for anyone wishing to buttress the contention that art and literature *must* serve social or didactic purposes.[4] Of the three elements—*narodnost*, *ideinost*, and *partiinost*—which have always been considered basic to socialist realism, the first two are derived from the utilitarian aesthetics of the last century, while the third is the special contribution of Lenin. Providing the sanction for Party control over literature as well as for the writer's enforced commitment to aims not necessarily of his own choosing, *partiinost* is the feature which marks off socialist realism from any

[3] Almost all the foreign socialist realists have fallen from grace, unless, like Theodore Dreiser, they died in good time. Upton Sinclair, once prized for his exposures of American capitalism, was suddenly dropped at the end of the forties (*Krokodil* had a caricature showing a bloated frog croaking anti-Soviet slanders in a bog). Howard Fast was excommunicated in 1959 at the Third Writers' Congress by his old friend Boris Polevoy (whose lying assurances about the fate of the Soviet Yiddish writers had finally disillusioned Fast).

[4] In particular, Chernyshevsky's study *Esteticheskiye otnosheniya iskusstva k deistvitelnosti* (1855) and Dobrolyubov's articles on contemporary literature (*Chto takoye oblomovshchina, Luch sveta v tyomnom tsarstve*, etc.).

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other kind of realism. By virtue of it, what for Belinsky and Chernyshevsky was only a moral imperative, became in Soviet times an externally imposed obligation, an ordinance enjoined by holy writ. When, in 1956, the historian Y. M. Strochkov made an attempt to cast doubt on the meaning of Lenin's words by suggesting that his article *Partiinaya organisatsiya i partiinaya literatura* had been intended to apply only to political and publicist writing, the official reaction was very sharp indeed: it was at once recognized that the removal of this keystone would have brought the whole edifice of Soviet literary doctrine tumbling down. After Strochkov, no one has ever dared raise this issue again.[5]

The best way of defining the kind of literature which met the three chief requirements of socialist realism is to list some of the principal works—what may be called the Soviet 'classics'—firmly established in the 'canon' by the end of Stalin's life, and then to decide what they have in common. In more or less chronological order, they included: Gorky's *Mat* (1906), Furmanov's *Chapayev* (1923), Fedin's *Goroda i gody* and Leonov's *Barsuki* (both 1924),Gladkov's *Tsement* (1925), Fadeyev's *Razgrom* (1927), Sholokhov's *Tikhii Don* (in four books, 1928–40), Leonov's *Sot* (1930), Sholokhov's *Podnyataya tselina,* Katayev's *Vremya, vperyod,* and Leonov's *Skutarevsky* (all three 1932), Nikolai Ostrovsky's *Kak zakalyalas stal* (1932–34), Ehrenburg's *Den vtoroi* (1934), Alexei Tolstoy's *Pyotr I* (three books, 1929–45), Ehrenburg's *Padeniye Parizha* (1941–42), Polevoy's *Povest o nastoyashchem cheloveke* (1946), Ehrenburg's *Burya* (1947), Fadeyev's *Molodaya Gvardiya* (1947, re-written version: 1951), Kochetov's *Zhurbiny* (1952), which, as a 'working-class' saga, appropriately, and on a distinct note of degeneration, closes the cycle of 'classical' socialist realism begun by Gorky's novel on a similar theme.

This list is by no means complete, but it is representative enough for the purposes of definition. It is a very mixed bag from several points of view. In their social or class origins, for instance, the authors of these works range from the aristocrat Alexei Tolstoy to the worker's son Nikolai Ostrovsky, with a majority in between of 'bourgeois-intellectual' background. In terms of their earlier literary allegiance, some were 'Fellow Travellers' (Ehrenburg, Leonov, and Fedin, for example), while others, such as Fadeyev, were members of RAPP, or of other militant 'left' or 'proletarian' groups subsequently liquidated in 1932 (writers belonging to the latter were lucky to escape denunciation as Trotskyists, which is perhaps one reason why 'Fellow Travellers' seem to predominate among the older generation of socialist realists). Not all of them were Party members (e.g. Leonov), failing to join even at times when the 'best people' usually found themselves under over-

[5] For a discussion of Strochkov's interpretation, see my article 'The Thaw and the Writers' (*Daedalus*, Summer 1960). I am now inclined to think that Strochkov was using the device common in the middle fifties of 'opposing' Lenin to Stalin, and that Lenin probably did intend his words to apply to literature of any kind—or at any rate, would not have minded their wider application.

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whelming pressure to do so (this is significant only as an indication that a chosen few were instructed to remain outside the Party to make it easier to 'refute' the recurrent bourgeois 'slander' about all writers having to be Party members). The work of some of them was not adopted into the canon in its entirety. Leonov's *Vor* (1927), for example, was excluded from the Collected Works that were published in 1953–55, and appeared in a dutifully re-written form only well after Stalin's death, in 1959. Ehrenburg's *Hulio Hurenito* (1922) was under a ban in Stalin's lifetime, and his *Burnaya zhizhn Lazika Roitshvantsa* (1927) has not only never been re-published, but appears to be one of the few works of Soviet literature that remains unmentionable. One of the most lauded 'classics' of socialist realism, *Kak zakalyalas stal*, creates the impression of almost having been made to measure, as an illustration of the theory.[6] Several other celebrated novels in the list (*Tikhii Don* among them) were extensively revised by their authors in the post-war period to bring them in line with the more exacting standards of Stalin's later years.[7] It will be seen from the dates of publication that at least half the books in the list were actually written before the concept of socialist realism had been born or received a name and one was co-opted from pre-revolutionary times. Almost all of them relate to the 'heroic' eras of Soviet history: the Civil War, the first five-year plan and collectivization, the second world war, and post-war reconstruction. A few are set, at least partially, in other countries (*Padeniye Parizha*), or even in other eras (*Pyotr I*).

Socialist realism of the Stalin years consisted preponderantly of novels, stories, and plays. Only a few writers of 'agitational' or epic verse were admitted to full status within the canon—for instance, Mayakovsky, thanks to Stalin's praise of him in 1936, and Demyan Bedny, until his temporary fall from grace in the same year.[8] Several poets were at least partially admitted on the strength of romantic ballads about the Civil War—Nikolai Tikhonov for such calls to revolutionary duty as *Ballada o sinem pakete* (1922), Eduard Bagritsky for *Ballada ob Opanase* (1927), and Nikolai Aseyev for his *Dvadtsat shest* (1925) about the martyred Baku commissars. Even Pasternak occasionally got an indulgent mention by the critics for his unfinished attempts to deal in epic fashion with

[6] The novel was the object of unprecedented propaganda in the Soviet press and its hero, Pavel Korchagin, is still held up to the young as an inspiring example. In view of the work's glaring literary inadequacies, there is a certain cynicism in this. A leading literary functionary in the Soviet Union once candidly described it to me as a pathetic work, totally devoid of talent (*bezdarneisheye, bespomoshchneisheye proizvedeniye*).

[7] The extraordinary details of this unparalleled operation are given in Maurice Friedberg's article, 'New Editions of Soviet Belles Lettres: A Study in Politics and Palimpsests', *The American Slavic and East European Review* XIII, No. 1 (Feb. 1954).

[8] Bedny's disgrace (caused by Stalin's displeasure with his libretto for the opera *Bogatyri*; though according to Nadezhda Mandelstam in *Hope against Hope*, an attendant reason may have been his imprudent complaint about the grubby finger marks left on books he had lent to Stalin) was short-lived, and in the late forties and early fifties he was often bracketed with Mayakovsky in the school textbooks as a great Soviet poet.

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revolutionary themes (*Leitenant Shmidt*, 1926–27, and *Devyatsot pyaty god*, 1925–26), but his lyrical 'sins' always debarred him from real acceptance as a Soviet poet.[9] Some older poets were 'co-opted' as precursors of socialist realism in poetry—notably Blok on the basis of a wilfully one-sided interpretation of *Dvenadtsat* and, more justifiably, Bryusov, for his poetic offerings to the revolution and Lenin (not to mention his gesture of joining the Party as early as 1921). But it was not until the second half of the thirties that a group of younger poets, formed entirely under the Soviet system (Tvardovsky, Simonov, Surkov, Aliger, and others), came, at least nominally, to fill the void left by the effective exclusion from the Soviet literary scene of almost all the older poets who mattered (apart from the 'balladeers'). It is apparent that, by its very nature, socialist realism was inimical to poetry as such, scarcely tolerating true lyricism and accepting only narrative, declamatory or 'occasional' verse (i.e. political satire, eulogy, etc. in the manner of Mikhalkov or Bezymensky). Lyrical poetry, it is true, made a brief appearance during the war (Simonov, Surkov, Aliger, and others) but was snuffed out when its usefulness as a release for the overriding sorrows of war had come to an end. The re-emergence of Akhmatova and Pasternak was equally short-lived and served as one of the pretexts for the cultural pogrom begun by Zhdanov in 1946.

In addition to the fully-fledged works of socialist realism of the type mentioned above, there were many others which, because of a certain ambiguity, were consigned to a 'grey zone', tolerated as a part of Soviet literature, but not accepted into the canon (these generally came under a virtual ban in the last years of Stalin's life). A most outstanding example was Yuri Olesha's *Zavist* (1927). The same applied to most of Babel and Pilnyak until they were proscribed after their disappearance in the Purges. Andrei Platonov, though never arrested, was virtually excluded by the middle thirties. Zoshchenko, Bulgakov, Ilf and Petrov, tolerated during the thirties, were cast out in the post-war years. Through the curious quirk of Stalin's having taken a fancy to *Dni Turbinykh*, the stage version of his *Belaya Gvardiya* (1925), Bulgakov was spared physically, but his work disappeared from sight after his death in 1939; Zoshchenko's concessions to the demands of the age, such as his 'biographical tale' *Kerensky* (1937)—actually somewhat double-edged—did not save him from anathematization in 1947. Ilf and Petrov were posthumously outlawed in 1949, during the campaign against 'homeless cosmopolitans', after the publishing house Sovetskii Pisatel had rashly brought out a one-volume edition of *Dvenadtsat stulyev* and *Zolotoi telyonok* (originally published in 1928 and 1931. It is a miracle that they survived so long—perhaps only because of the inglorious end of the

[9] One of the reasons for Pasternak's survival may have been the hope that he might one day fulfil the slight promise of his long poems and be 'won over'. Nadezhda Mandelstam quotes Fadeyev as once having said: 'You know, Pasternak is not one of us either, but all the same he is a little closer to us and we can come to terms with him in some things' (*Hope against Hope*, p. 152).

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villain Ostap Bender). In general, few 'grey zone' writers survived the last years of Stalin's life and were only gradually rescued from oblivion in the period after 1956.

WHAT, then, was the common denominator among the 'canonical' works mentioned above which determined their admittance to socialist realist status? What was it, conversely, that disqualified those in the 'grey zone'? It is clear that the decisive feature shared by all of them was their authors' attitude to the historical process. It did not matter whether they were Marxist or not, or even whether they wrote from inner conviction (some probably did not) as long as they presented the course of events and the development of society in such a way as to lead the reader to conclude that *ultimately* 'victory' was certain. The arena chosen to demonstrate this could be microcosmic (say, at its crudest, the struggle to raise production in a factory or farm) or national—the fight for survival in the Civil War or second world war—or international, as in Fedin's *Goroda i gody* and Ehrenburg's *Padeniye Parizha*. Indeed, it could be cosmic: Alexei Tolstoy's *Aelita* (1922), which describes the triumph of revolution on Mars, was frequently reprinted in later years as one of the rare examples of socialist realist science fiction. The same author's major novel on Peter the Great showed that socialist realism—particularly in the second half of the thirties—could also embrace distant epochs, depicting them as a necessary preparation for the revolution to come, even though it meant implying that Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible were enlightened forerunners of Lenin and Stalin.

This central requirement—that the author display a certain historical optimism—was less restricting than might be thought, at least in the early period. Some of the retrospectively adopted novels, such as Leonov's *Barsuki* and Sholokhov's *Tikhii Don*, still strike the reader by their 'objectivity', particularly in the light of the more stringent standards of socialist realism in the post-war years. Both Leonov and Sholokhov (at least, in the first two parts of *Tikhii Don*) portrayed the Civil War and its aftermath in an almost neutral way—both sides committed atrocities, honourable and courageous people could be found in both camps, it was quite possible for an ordinary person, like Sholokhov's hero Grigori Melekhov, to become confused and change sides, eventually landing up on the 'wrong' one. The crucial point is, however, that at the end Melekhov appears as a tragic, broken figure and the Soviet critics could thus point to the implication that his total defeat and abandonment were the result of having been unable, through weakness, blindness, or *force majeure*, to grasp the nature of the struggle, failing to make the 'right' choice and being 'thrown on the rubbish dump of history' as a consequence. If one substitutes 'historical forces' for Gods, this was tragedy in the Greek sense—a man could anger 'history' as he could Zeus, and be punished accordingly. It is certainly not true, as is sometimes said, that there was no place for tragedy in socialist realism. Several of its

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better specimens were even tragedies ending in defeat for the 'right' side (for example, Gorky's *Mat* and Fadeyev's *Razgrom*), but to qualify as a socialist realist the author of such tragedies had to make it plain that defeat was but a temporary setback on the road to certain victory in the long run. There were, of course, two kinds of tragedy: the tragedy of defeat and death for those representing 'progress' (Pavel Vlasov in Gorky's *Mat* and Levinson in Fadeyev's *Razgrom*); and there was the tragedy of those who failed to see the light (Grigori Melekhov in *Tikhii Don*, and particularly the type of 'wavering intellectuals' exemplified by Andrei Startsov in Fedin's *Goroda i gody* and Volodya Safonov in Ehrenhurg's *Den vtoroi*). As the inclusion of *Tikhii Don* in the canon shows, 'positive heroes' were not obligatory—though desirable, like Fadeyev's Levinson—at the centre of the action. Sholokhov's Bunchuk and Stokman, as the conscious representatives of 'progress', are both marginal and artistically unconvincing. In the later thirties, and particularly in the post-war years, however, socialist realist orthodoxy demanded a schematic contrast between 'positive' and 'negative' characters which destroyed the sense of tragedy. Even in novels on the war theme, such as Fadeyev's *Molodaya Gvardiya*, individuals who found themselves on the wrong side were treated as mere criminals, never as the victims of historical circumstance, while defeat and death in the service of the cause was robbed of its tragic pathos by the sententious way in which the moral was drawn. In the last years of Stalin's life socialist realism degenerated into the final absurdity of the 'theory of lack of conflict' and the 'varnishing of reality' (defensive responses to the 'Zhdanov decrees'), with the result that the novels and plays of that time, now mercifully forgotten by common consent, were devoid of either plausibility or dramatic tension.

Taking an implicit (or better still, explicit) declaration of faith in ultimate 'victory' as the essential criterion, it is easy to see the consistent principle behind the 'co-optation' of Fellow Traveller novels into the canon. Indeed, this criterion was felt to be so important that features totally impermissible by the later standards of socialist realism were overlooked or forgiven for its sake: for example, the even-handedness with which Leonov treats the Bolsheviks from the town and the anarchist partisans in *Barsuki*, the stark description of Red atrocities in *Tikhii Don*, the brutally frank account of the human cost of industrialization at the beginning of Ehrenburg's *Den vtoroi* (much toned down in post-war editions), and the general tendency, in novels of the twenties and early thirties, to give due weight to the ordeals and cruelty of the struggle, and the squalor of everyday life. (There was of course less indulgence for this kind of thing as the years went by—Fadeyev paid dearly for his description in the first edition of *Molodaya Gvardiya* of the chaos on the Soviet side at the beginning of the second world war.) It was even found expedient to overlook unresolved ambiguities in the attitude of an author—such as Leonov displayed in his earlier novels—as long as the

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balance was tipped at least slightly in favour of belief in victory for the 'new'. There were clearly degrees of 'optimism' and a writer's subsequent record was certainly taken into account in assessing the socialist realist potential of his earlier work—indeed progress from a certain scepticism to absolute faith was a useful illustration of the power of the 'truth'. It is in itself a telling comment on Soviet literary doctrine that the more ambiguous a work is in its all-important conclusion about the final historical outcome, the more successful it tends to be as literature. *Tikhii Don* is a good example of this general rule. There is much in the first two parts that gainsays the 'message' of the ending. The novel can easily leave the reader with the feeling—as *Dr. Zhivago* does in a way consciously intended by Pasternak—that *ultimately* history and the doings of men take place on a relatively lower level compared with the eternal process of nature, that they are a finite part of the infinite, so that 'victory' in any human conflict is never final or complete.[10]

It is easy to see why works at first consigned to the 'grey zone' and later suppressed altogether did not pass the vital test for acceptance into the canon. Babel's *Konarmiya*, for instance, despite the fact that it dealt with the same sort of 'heroic' Civil War material as *Tikhii Don* and the highly favourable circumstance of being defended by Gorky from Budyonny's attack on it, was nevertheless debarred because of its lack of any 'message', except the dispiriting one that Cossacks are cruel, as is life itself, with no end in sight to the miseries of the human condition. Almost the only time that Babel expressed a general view about the future—and then only indirectly through the old Jew Gedali in the *Konarmiya* story of that title—it was to put forward the scarcely 'optimistic' and certainly un-Marxist idea that it would take an 'Internationale of men of good will' to save the world from its own wickedness.[11] Babel's efforts in the thirties to adapt led only to the production of unfinished fragments (for example, *Kolyvushka*, 1930, announced as a chapter from a novel to be entitled *Velikaya Staritsa*), so that he was never able to expiate the 'sins' of *Konarmiya*. He thus remained in the 'grey zone' until he was expunged from the record after his arrest in 1939. The same was true of Olesha's *Zavist* where the author's own ambivalence in dealing with the struggle between 'old' and 'new' is less

[10] There is a strong undercurrent of nature symbolism in a lot of Soviet writing. Whether consciously so intended or not, it tends to contradict the belief in historical 'victory'. Leonov employed this device both in *Barsuki* (the legend of King Kalafat) and in *Russki Les* (1952) where, despite the camouflage of praise for Stalin's great afforestation schemes, the wanton destruction of the forests is subtly identified with ruthless exploitation of the Russian people under the Soviet regime. Nature, as a symbol for something at once pure and invincible, plays a large part in the 'new wave' post-Stalin fiction (notably Kazakov and Tendryakov).

[11] The Gedali story was used to mount a fantastic provocation against Babel in 1929. The Polish communist novelist Bruno Jasienski wrote a letter to *Literaturnaya Gazeta* calling attention to an article in the Warsaw literary journal *Wiadomosci* which alleged that Babel had admitted to a Polish writer he had met in France that Gedali's idea represented his own philosophy. Babel vehemently denied the suggestion in a letter to the paper.

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latent than in, say, Leonov's *Barsuki*. Although Olesha's quixotic survivors from the past are defeated and humiliated in resounding fashion, being made to wallow in their own impotence, the reader is nevertheless left with the feeling that some ghost in the machine may yet haunt, if not one day confound the bold engineers who think that the whole world can be run like a model sausage-factory. It seems probable that Olesha's novel—like a good deal of Esenin's later verse—was tolerated not least for its demoralizing effect on the representatives of the 'old', even though it cast doubt on the permanency and wisdom of the 'new'. In this sense some 'grey zone' literature could fulfil an important socio-political function. Leonov's *Vor*, to take an example of a 'grey zone' work by a writer the bulk of whose remaining output was accepted into the canon, was too obviously pessimistic, too full of disillusionment both on the part of the author and his leading character —Mitya Vekshin, the disenchanted Civil War veteran who takes to crime during NEP—to fulfil Soviet literature's task, in Gorky's words at the First Writers' Congress in 1934, of 'helping to turn the whole planet into a beautiful home for man, united in one family'.[12] A number of other prose works of the twenties and early thirties were of course eventually banned because of their outright 'hostility': Andrei Plantonov's *Gorod Gradov* (1929), a satire on bureaucratic degeneration (the same author's *Kotlovan*, a nightmarish tale of 'socialist construction', was not even published, like most of his later fiction), Ehrenburg's *Burnaya zhizhn Lazika Roitshvantsa* with its *leitmotif* that all is for the worst in the worst of all possible worlds, Bulgakov's *Rokovye yaitsa* (1925) with its Wellsian vision of doom in a society controlled by overweening bureaucrats, not to mention books by Soviet authors that appeared only abroad: Zamyatin's *My* (written in 1920, and published in France in 1924), and Pilnyak's *Krasnoye derevo* (Berlin, 1928).

From the very nature of the main criterion applied to prose, it is obvious that nearly all poetry worthy of the name—particularly lyric poetry—was automatically disqualified. With the best will in the world, a poet could hardly be expected to deploy the necessary social and historical arguments—except, as already pointed out, in epic or narrative verse—but few genuine lyric poets could sustain this kind of effort, as Pasternak's example shows. The result of a real poet's attempt to force himself to write an ode in praise of Stalin is powerfully described by Nadezhda Mandelstam in chapter 43 of her memoir *Hope against Hope*. The only poet who was capable of making the eventually crippling effort to suppress his own lyricism ('stepping on the throat of his song')

[12] *Vor* was also objectionable because of the influence of Dostoyevsky, particularly *Besy*. One of the characters, Chikilev, is a clear borrowing of Dostoyevsky's Shigalev who looks forward to a society in which the chief binding force will be universal fear and mutual distrust. When Pasternak, in his *Sketch for an Autobiography*, wanted to find an adequate word for Stalin's terror in 1937, he invented the term *shigalyovshchina*. Leonov's introduction of this prophetic idea into a novel published in 1927 shows how narrow was the dividing line between a future socialist realist and a counter-revolutionary.

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in favour of *partiinost* was Mayakovsky. Perhaps it was only possible because it satisfied certain quirks of character, but, even so, it cost him his life and required genius of a kind to do at all. Stalin, with a shrewdness that does him credit, recognized this by canonizing him in 1936—there *had* to be a 'socialist realist' poet of real stature and Mayakovsky was the only candidate. This was his ironical and incongruous posthumous service to a doctrine unborn at the time of his death. All other poets either perished at an early stage (Blok, Gumilev, Esenin), or were reduced to silence, not necessarily by censorship alone—the 'dumbness' by which Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Mandelstam were stricken in the second half of the twenties is mentioned by Nadezhda Mandelstam (p. 162 of *Hope against Hope*) as a factor that arose well before external pressures became intolerable.

Prose, then—and in particular the long novel (sometimes in verse, like Tvardovsky's *Strana Muravia,* 1936, which was divided into 19 'chapters')—was the form most adapted to socialist realism. Only with the discursiveness of the traditional Russian novel—as Babel understood when he made his vain attempt to fulfil the 'social contract' at the beginning of the thirties—was it feasible to provide the extensive social background and portrayal of character in relation to which the 'truths' involved had necessarily to be demonstrated (Soviet writers, said Zhdanov in 1934, must depict reality in its revolutionary *development*).

All other features of 'classical' socialist realism were secondary—both in the sense that they logically derived from the main criterion described above, and in the sense that the Party set far less store by them. The insistence on a 'realist' style, for instance, was based on the correct assumption that the 'message' would all the more readily be understood by a mass readership. It was natural of course that the aesthetic demands of the theory should bear the imprint of the personal tastes and prejudices of Gorky, the author of the first socialist realist novel. But he was not fanatical, as witness his tolerance of Babel's conscious revolt against Russian realism. The fact is, however, that non-realist forms were frowned upon and denounced as 'formalism' only because—like lyric poetry—they were ill-adapted to delivering the 'message'. The comparative unimportance of form is shown both by the acceptance of Mayakovsky, whose incomprehensibility to the masses was compensated for by the perfection of his sentiments, and by the fact, pointed out by Andrei Sinyavsky, that even 'realism' became inadequate as a vehicle for the cruder demands of Stalin's later years.

IN the 18 years since Stalin's death, the relationship of Soviet literary theory to current practice has altered radically. There is no need for the purposes of this paper to detail the stages by which this has come about. It suffices here to state the obvious general conclusion that in the post-Stalin years literary 'theory', that is, the doctrine of socialist realism, has been overtaken by events and constantly belied

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by actual trends beyond the control of its keepers. The gradual introduction into literature of previously forbidden themes, the rehabilitation of almost all of Stalin's victims and in many cases their re-publication, the general ideological havoc wrought by the 20th Congress and some of Khrushchev's pronouncements and actions (notably at the Third Writers' Congress in 1959), the flood of influences from abroad (not least from the 'People's Democracies' and the 'revisionist' Marxists of Western Europe), the partial, if erratic, relaxation of censorship, the spectacular growth of uncensored *samizdat* publication, the crystallization of a variety of conflicting political moods and their public expression, however muffled—all these factors have put an impossible strain on the theory of socialist realism which was, after all, elaborated at a time when the power to enforce it was not in doubt. Indeed, it was posited on the existence of firm control over literary practice. Its rhetoric was suited only to what Zamyatin termed a state of 'entropy', a static situation of imposed unanimity. In other words, it was adequate to a policy of forced convergence, but is hopelessly thrown out of kilter by the present trend towards differentiation. It is not surprising that since about the middle sixties the theory has at last begun to show a slight sensitivity to all the changes that have taken place in real life, and has even itself been subject, on a minor scale, to the general process of segmentation. If the exercise were not too tedious, it would now be possible to plot 'left-wing', 'right-wing', and 'centrist' trends in the current writing about socialist realism. The custodians of the doctrine, that is, those critics-cum-ideologists who regularly write theoretical articles on literature in *Kommunist*, *Voprosy Literatury*, and the 'fat' journals—A. Metchenko, V. Ivanov, B. Suchkov, Y. Barabash, Vitali Ozerov, G. Lomidze, L. Novichenko, A. Ovcharenko, and others—have been debating among themselves in recent years in a way that betrays unmistakable apprehension about the glaring, no longer concealable gap between theory and practice, as well as the infiltration of 'alien' viewpoints. One such exchange took place on the pages of *Novy mir* in a series of articles begun in October 1970 and continuing into 1971. Several of these critics have also written books in which the differences between them are very apparent, though it is a low-keyed polemic among people who recognise their basic solidarity in the defence of the doctrine against those many Soviet literary scholars and writers who no longer even bother to pay lip-service to socialist realism. The majority of them are, needless to say, more or less conservative, and the nuances between them are hardly worth discussing, but one of them, A. Ovcharenko, has come forth in his book *Sotsialisticheskii realizm i sovremennyi literaturnyi protsess* (1968) and in his contribution to the debate in *Novy mir* (May 1971) as the advocate of a cautious *aggiornamento*. It is difficult to say how authoritative this may be, but Ovcharenko's standing, as a frequent contributor to *Kommunist*, must be fairly high. It is also noteworthy that in February 1970 he was appointed to the editorial board of *Novy mir* with the evident assignment

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of helping to wean it away from the excessive 'liberalism' of the Tvardovsky years. He probably represents a middle-of-the-road orthodoxy, thus reflecting at the level of theory the general policy of the present Party leadership towards literature and steering a course between the 'right' who want no modification at all and the 'left' who, as is darkly hinted by Ovcharenko himself, would gladly jettison the concept of socialist realism as something utterly compromised by its dogmatic interpretation under the 'cult of personality', accepting in its place Garaudy's revisionist '*réalisme sans rivages*'. Garaudy and the 'Austrian renegade', Ernst Fischer, are at present the particular bogeymen of the Soviet literary establishment—their doctrines were denounced by Vitali Ozerov at the Fifth Writers' Congress in June 1971 as a call for 'ideological pluralism', a denial of *partiinost*, and *horribile dictu*, an attempt to substitute Trotskyism for Leninism.

IN his book, Ovcharenko moves away from the rigid Stalinist definition of socialist realism while trying to draw the line one may not cross without lapsing into 'revisionism' and going over to the camp of the ideological enemy. The contorted postures which this balancing act involves often make Ovcharenko's arguments difficult to follow, but through all the hedging and back-tracking, one can discern significant re-thinking on three central points: the question of form, the application of doctrine to the Soviet literary heritage, and the nature of current writing in the Soviet Union.

Time and time again Ovcharenko insists that the essential demand of socialist realism remains what it was: namely, that literature can only be *partiinii* and must help to lead men to the bright horizons of the millennium by expressing faith in its history-ordained advent. But having made his position on this central point clear, he goes on to say that socialist realism is hospitable to *any* literary techniques or devices which may further its main purpose. 'Stream of consciousness', fantasy, the deliberate distortion of reality [13]—all these may be employed in its service. Moreover he claims, in the face of all the evidence, that this has always been so and quotes Lunacharsky as once having said: 'If, in order to accentuate a certain social feature more effectively, it is necessary to show . . . what lurks beneath a façade of propriety by means of a distorted, caricatured image, then such a procedure is profoundly *realistic*.' Even more tellingly, the progenitor of socialist realism, Maxim Gorky himself, had said in 1932: 'If you are hindered by the techniques of realism in depicting the hero of our age in the way he deserves, then seek *other* techniques.' Undoubtedly aware that this advice could not have been

[13] Ovcharenko suggests that some of the techniques claimed by modernism in fact belong to the general development of literature and may therefore be incorporated into socialist realism as part of its rightful heritage. He quotes a study by the French scholar N. Aucouturier showing that 'stream of consciousness', for instance, was anticipated in Russian realism by the 'inner monologue' of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Chekhov.

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quoted for the guidance of Soviet writers in the later Stalin years, Ovcharenko comments: 'Today Gorky's words take on new force. Our art is called upon to depict both communist man, and the very complicated process of the evolution of the man of the old world, which turns out to be more involved and lengthy than might have been imagined. To show communist man in all his grandeur, it will be necessary not only to exploit the best that has been achieved by artists of all times, but constantly to create something new as well. Therefore one can only welcome the explorations (*poiski*) characteristic for the literature of all socialist countries, as well as for progressive writers in capitalist countries.'

The real sense of this apparent concession (characteristically disguised as something that was always inherent in the doctrine) is that it would be wise, in the present hard times, to yield on a secondary point in the hope of safeguarding the cherished core of socialist realism—its extra-literary function. What Ovcharenko is saying in effect is: 'Be formalists if you like, only please serve the cause!' This is, in fact, merely an extension of the licence that Stalin had posthumously granted as a special favour to Mayakovsky. Apart from raising tricky logical problems that even the dialectic would be hard put to resolve (how would one classify a non-realist work of socialist realism?), such a minor concession about form is irrelevant to the problems besetting Soviet literary theory at the present day (though it has some importance for the past). In prose, few of the younger writers have shown much inclination to indulge in formal experiment (except for Sinyavsky and Daniel who went to prison for employing the devices of fantasy and deliberate distortion of reality in order to show 'what lurks beneath a façade of propriety'); on the contrary, they have displayed a marked preference for the techniques of old-fashioned realism. This makes their challenge to accepted theory all the more insidious: it is, one might say, 'realism with a vengeance'. As regards poetry, the right to considerably greater freedom in the choice of formal devices has in any case been won (in the teeth of opposition) over the last decade and a half, so that Ovcharenko's doctrinal 'concession' comes too late to be meaningful. In poetry too, the main headache for the theorists is what is said, not *how* it is said.

The second aspect of Ovcharenko's *aggiornamento*, which emerges in his gentle debate with other exegetes to the 'right' of him, concerns the problem of examining the past heritage of Soviet literature in the light of official theory, especially that considerable part of it that was either consigned to the 'grey zone' or suppressed altogether. This question overlaps, of course, with the third and even more contentious one of how to deal with the variegated phenomena of contemporary Soviet literature.

The view of the 'conservatives' (as expressed, for instance, by A. Metchenko, a senior contributor to *Kommunist*, in his book with the eloquent title *Krovnoye, zavoyovannoye*, 1971) is that in the early days

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of Soviet literature there was a linear development from 'critical realism' (and the 'progressive' strands in futurism, symbolism) towards socialist realism. According to this notion, through a process of struggle during which alien and hostile trends were eliminated—together with those representatives of them who failed to mend their ways in time—there was an inexorable movement from 'lower' to 'higher', until socialist realism became established as the *only* method. Since there were 'difficulties' on the way, the career of individual writers could be like an obstacle race—some, like Leonov, came through to the state of grace, some, like Olesha, Platonov and Pasternak, remained in limbo, while other hapless wretches, like Pilnyak and Zamyatin, were cast into outer darkness.

Ovcharenko's view is a more subtle one which, in so far as it reflects actual practice (having to a considerable extent been dictated by it), amounts to proposing that the belated sanction of modified theory be applied to what for years now has been a pragmatic approach to the past in the writing of Soviet literary scholars. Instead of seeing the history of Soviet literature in terms of a simple convergence towards socialist realism, Ovcharenko maintains that both in the past and at present, *different* trends have always coexisted—generally in a state of conflict with each other—and that not to recognize and take account of this plain fact is to adopt an 'unhistorical' point of view with disastrous methodological results. While socialist realism and its ultimate triumph is still the highest desideratum, the fact must be faced that, in the wicked state of the real world, what one finds at any given moment (including the present day in the Soviet Union) is not the imminent triumph or undivided reign of socialist realism, but a confused jumble of conflicting tendencies, which it is the prime task of literary scholarship and criticism to analyse in 'concrete-historical' terms. In other words, socialist realism has to compete for attention in literary scholarship and fight it out in current literary practice with other approaches. Ovcharenko even implies that this is not a bad thing, inasmuch as socialist realism may be strengthened in the process of its struggle to establish itself as the only valid method. (If this particular argument in favour of pluralism were carried further, there is no knowing where it would end, as the 'conservatives' are quick to point out.) The corollary is, of course, that socialist realism cannot logically be imposed by force. If it is to hold its own and eventually sweep the world, it must do so because of an intrinsic superiority which cannot be imparted to it by administrative means (as Ovcharenko admits, its present difficulties are indeed largely caused by the 'narrowly-dogmatic' way in which it was applied in the past). In the usual interpretation, socialist realism had supposedly arisen out of the actual practice of 'progressive' writers, going back to Gorky's *Mat* (1906), which had been codified and given a name in the early thirties. Its triumph had been formally signalized in 1934 by its adoption into the Statutes of the Union of Writers as the 'basic method' (*osnovnoi*

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metod) to be employed by Soviet writers. Thereafter, during a further period of *Gleichschaltung* in the forties and fifties, it became virtually identical with the concept of 'Soviet literature' as such. Opposing this traditional Stalinist idea, Ovcharenko contends, interestingly, that the concept 'socialist realism' is both older and narrower than the concept 'Soviet literature'. It is older because its roots may go back a good deal further than Gorky (to the literature of the Paris Commune, for instance), but at the same time it is narrower because it does not, and never did, contain the *whole* of Soviet literature, being only, as it were, an optimum towards which all should strive, until in the distant communist future it comes to be the sole form of literature. We need not concern ourselves with the logical problems raised by the universal triumph in literature of what is a moral rather than an aesthetic principle (it is, indeed, a vision worthy of one of Saltykov's insane *gradonachalniki*), but Ovcharenko's remarks, as applied to the present, enable him, if not all of his colleagues, to get out of the theoretical impasse into which events since Stalin's death have gradually driven them. It is in effect a plea for the legitimization of what now actually happens in the practice of Soviet literary criticism—among other things the discussion of early works of Soviet literature for what they were, rather than as examples of socialist realism *avant la lettre*. There is no need, in Ovcharenko's words, to 'shamefacedly gloss over the fact that in the first years of the Soviet regime some writers made attempts, often unsuccessful, to express communist subject-matter not only in realist or romantic forms, but also in symbolist, expressionist, or neo-classical forms. . . . For me,' he continues, 'Mayakovsky's *Misteria-Buffe* is an example of expressionism, and Bryusov's *Vesnyanka* and *Rossiya* of symbolism'.[14] By the same token, it should now be possible—as indeed it is—to talk about Akhmatova, Pasternak, Bulgakov, Tsvetayeva, Platonov, and others almost on their own terms, as part of Soviet literature, however alien or contradictory they may have been in terms of socialist realism (and, incidentally, however much some of them might have objected to being considered 'Soviet' writers). There is also theoretical justification in Ovcharenko's *aggiornamento* for the treatment in 'concrete-historical' fashion of the creative careers of those writers—particularly old Fellow Travellers like Leonov and Fedin—whose works are still held up as models of socialist realism. This, he implies, is preferable to selecting and twisting the facts in such a way as to 'prove' that these 'classics' progressed in a more or less straight line to the high plateau of socialist realism, where they now reside in Olympian serenity. (This kind of approach still inhibits proper study of the early work of Leonov, Katayev, and Ehrenburg, and in particular of their post-Stalin writings. Such a study would no doubt show that only the work of their middle, that is their worst, period belongs, properly speaking, to socialist realism.)

[14] These two atrocious poems are 'symbolist' only in the crudest sense; the first (1918) compares the revolution to the awakening of springtime.

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THE extent to which this *aggiornamento* only reflects the well-established practice of Soviet literary scholarship can be seen in the pages of *Voprosy literatury* and *Novy mir* (which occasionally deviate well to the 'left' of it [15]), in the four-volume *Istoriya russkoi sovietskoi literatury* put out by the Gorky Institute (1967–71), and especially in the *Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya* (Volumes 1–6, 1962–71). The latter has established a remarkably high standard of objectivity and tries to avoid question-begging labels (one of its techniques is to report as a matter of fact that so-and-so has been attacked in the Soviet press for such-and-such errors or deviations, without itself expressing any editorial opinion). The encyclopaedia has, of course, distinguished itself as a stronghold of 'liberalism' in the sphere of literary scholarship, and has found itself fairly constantly under fire as a result (see, for example, the article by V. Ivanov: *Metodologicheskiye zigzagi literaturnoi entsiklopedii* in *Kommunist*, No. 14, 1969). Nevertheless the recently published sixth volume shows every sign of maintaining the same high standard, if not throughout, at least in part. In a sense this is possible because, ironically, the interests of the 'liberals' and the influential middle-of-the-road theoreticians of socialist realism, such as Ovcharenko, happen to coincide at a certain practical level, or rather they can be expressed in such a way as to appear the same at first sight. The point is that the 'liberals' have long used the Aesopian device of mentioning in the same context writers who would formerly have been strictly separated. This is a way of introducing discussion of less 'acceptable' writers by mentioning them in the context of 'safe' ones: Tikhonov, Mayakovsky, and even Demyan Bedny can serve as an umbrella, as it were, for Pasternak, Akhmatova, or Mandelstam. This results in a tendency to blur distinctions and gloss over polarities in a manner that infuriates critics on the 'right' (though it can work both ways: there are cases in which the names of 'orthodox' writers are linked with those of their antipodes in an evident attempt to confer respectability by association). Ovcharenko's motive for mentioning formerly incompatible names in the same breath is different: it is to escape the theoretical dilemmas of socialist realism by admitting the need for discussion of the conflicting phenomena that coexist *within* Soviet literature. But he insists on a rigorous analysis to differentiate them—something that is often lacking in the encyclopaedia, as its critics point out. The blandness with which 'incompatible' names are lumped together by the author of the article on Russian literature of the Soviet period in the sixth volume is well illustrated by the statement that during the second world war 'the old masters D. Bedny, Akhmatova, and Pasternak came out with patriotic calls for struggle and victory'. The

[15] A remarkable example from *Novy mir* (No. 9, 1969) is the article *Budushchee russkoi literatury* by the venerable historian of ancient Russian literature, D. Likhachev, who, looking at things in the perspective of a thousand years, concludes that the only basic feature of the development of Russian literature is its search for ever greater freedom from formal constraints, despite occasional attempts to reverse the trend (for example, under Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great . . .).

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same lack of discrimination occurs in lists of writers and works that have been rehabilitated in recent years: 'An active part is played [sic!] in contemporary literary life by works, written many years ago, but not re-published for a long time. In the first instance there are the works of A. Vesyoly, I. Babel, P. Vasilyev, B. Kornilov, M. Koltsov, I. Katayev, V. Kirshon, and others. Together with them the reader has had restored to him (*chitatelyu vozvrashcheny*) the verse of Akhmatova, the works of Zoshchenko and Platonov, the prose of Bulgakov, including such important books written in the thirties as his *Teatralny roman* (published in 1965), and particularly the satirical-philosophical novel *Master i Margarita* (published in 1966–67).' Koltsov and Kirshon, loyal supporters of the regime who perished through the vagaries of Stalin's terror, are odd company for Akhmatova and Bulgakov. But though the motives for admitting all and sundry to 'Soviet literature' may not always be of the purest, the practical result, in so far as it entails a tolerance unheard of by the standards of 15 years ago, can only be welcomed.

The recent controversies about the meaning and scope of socialist realism have also revealed profound differences among the 'theorists' about how to deal with current Soviet literature. Obviously, the 'conservatives' would like to exclude everything that is not socialist realist, but this would mean narrowing the definition of 'Soviet literature' in a way that is simply no longer possible. The alternative, as for the past, is to admit the existence of different trends and this leads on to a recognition of the very awkward fact—condemned by some and condoned by others—that a good deal of the most significant work published in the Soviet Union in the years since Stalin's death has to be qualified as 'critical' realism. As Ovcharenko tells us, this has been said of 'individual works' by Solzhenitsyn, S. Zalygin, V. Bykov, V. Voinovich, and V. Syomin. He himself does not commit himself to this view of them, saying only that it is a complicated problem which cannot be 'waved away', and that the relationship of these writers to critical realism needs further study. But in another connexion he says that the description of socialist realism in the Statutes of the Union of Writers as the 'basic method' must be taken literally to mean that there are *other* methods, even at the present day, which cannot be *simply dismissed*. In other words, there exist alternatives to socialist realism that form a *legitimate* part of contemporary Soviet literature. As a recognition of fact, this represents the most far-reaching of Ovcharenko's concessions. Inasmuch as it reflects quasi-official thinking (as I believe it does), it provides doctrinal support for the flexible attitude which is in actual fact shown towards present-day Soviet writing, however much such flexibility may on occasion succumb to administrative pressures, censorship, etc., (but these too are variables nowadays). Once again it must be emphasized that these suggested adjustments to the theory spring less from a change of heart, than from a sober recognition of the bitter truth that, in its 'classical' form, the doctrine patently fails to account for the reality

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that everybody can see. This is the covering-up of the King's nakedness as practised by all keepers of a decaying ideology that is no longer properly enforced by a secular arm. The essence of this subterfuge—for such it is—consists in claiming that your doctrine has never been so rigid as its enemies make out, but that it is, on the contrary, a developing, living system, capable of adapting itself to the times. In the case of socialist realism this means, among other things, that having for decades abused and proscribed them in its name, and in some cases having killed them, you now 'accept' Akhmatova, Babel, Platonov, Bulgakov, Pasternak, Mandelstam, Kafka, and so on.

EVEN a cursory inspection of the literature that in the last decade *has got into print* (that is, leaving aside *samizdat*, which is often only work rejected by the censorship) shows that Ovcharenko's solemn recognition of the coexistence in present-day Soviet literature of different trends is nothing but a *vérité de la Palisse*. Worse still, from the point of view even of modified literary theory, most, if not all, of contemporary writing of quality is a denial of socialist realism, since it fails to meet what we have seen to be the crucial ideological test of affirming belief in 'ultimate victory' and giving readers positive examples of how people may and should consciously work to bring it about. On the contrary, the best of Soviet prose in the post-Stalin years has tended, using realism as the appropriate method, actually to undermine its readers' faith—if they had any—not only in future victory, but also in the historical rightness of the chosen path. This is most manifestly so in the case of those writers mentioned by Ovcharenko, whom some Soviet critics regard as 'critical realists'. Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den Ivana Denisovicha* (1962) and *Matryonin Dvor* (1963) describe a mournful reality stemming from a disastrous past—the building of socialism was expressly likened in the first to the setting-up of a concentration camp—and promising no good in the future. The 'message' of both is that the world lies in evil and that though it may be graced by righteous persons, it will not be redeemed by the purposeful movement of the 'masses' in a direction foreordained by 'history'. S. Zalygin in *Na Irtyshe* (*Novy mir*, No. 2, 1964) shows collectivization to have been a national catastrophe, starkly symbolized at the end of his tale by a peasant house being pushed into the river in a senseless gesture of self-destruction. Vasili Bykov's novels on the war (*Mertvye sramu ne imut* (*Novy mir*, No. 1, 1966) and *Sotnikov* (*Novy mir*, No. 5, 1970)) are far removed from the heroics of previous years, picturing the war for what it was as a tragedy beyond redemption in human accounting. After reading Bykov, one is not inclined to feel that bestiality on such a scale can be made good by the achievement of a social purpose, however lofty. Most awkward of all, given the nature of the social purpose in question, are the studies of the Soviet working class by Voinovich and Syomin. Nothing more authentic on this theme has appeared in print. Voinovich, in such stories as *Ya khochu byt*

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chestnym and *Dva tovarishcha* (*Novy mir*, No. 2, 1963, and No. 1, 1967), and Syomin in his novel *Semero v odnom dome* (*Novy mir*, No. 6, 1965) convey an impression of an alienated proletariat which contradicts the clichés of the standard Soviet 'production' novel in unanswerable fashion.[16]

The drift towards a prose that ignores or flouts the central premise of socialist realism began, of course, in the fifties with Ehrenburg's *Ottepel* (1954), in which the eloquent contrast between the two artists Pukhov and Saburov was rightly seen by the critics as a challenge to the principle of *partiinost*, and continued with the crop of works in 1956—Dudintsev's *Ne khlebom yedinym*, Yashin's *Rychagi*, and Granin's *Sobstvennoye mneniye*—all of which, after being much fought over, gradually became accepted as a legitimate part of Soviet literature, finding a more or less honoured place in the encyclopaedias and histories of literature. The early battles after Stalin's death prepared the way for the younger prose writers such as Tendryakov, Nagibin, Kazakov, Aksyonov, Gladilin, and others whose 'neo-realism' (or whatever one calls it) has dominated Soviet prose, such as it is, in the last decade and a half. It is significant that these 'new wave' writers have even abandoned the preferred genre of classical socialist realism, namely the long novel, finding that the short story or *povest* exempts them from the need to supply a broad social setting for their characters. Within the restricted compass of the shorter form they are able to show people only in the context of personal or moral problems which could arise in *any* society (hence the accusation by hostile critics of 'abstract humanism'). In this low-key fiction, Soviet society is generally taken for granted as the indifferent, even hostile, backdrop against which small private dramas are enacted. Since the younger prose writers have never known any other, it is hardly surprising that they accept Soviet institutions not as the manifestation of a higher order of things, but only as the banal, sometimes even slightly comic, framework of daily life. In most cases their 'heroes' (or 'anti-heroes') are at odds with society, or have lost their place in it (e.g. Kazakov's *Trali-Vali*, 1961, *Adam i Eva*, 1962). They are never identified with its long-term aims, and its values are sometimes implicitly questioned—in Tendryakov's *Sud* (1961), for instance, the *summum bonum* of industrial development is seen as a factor estranging man from his natural environment. The story was much attacked for this at the time of its appearance.

The only outstanding long novels written in the post-Stalin era, Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* (1958) and Solzhenitsyn's *Rakovy Korpus* and

16 In *Dva tovarishcha* Voinovich paints a picture of 'alienation' in the original Marxist sense that it would be difficult to better as an extreme instance of the modern industrial worker's lack of personal involvement with the processes and product of his labour: the two young comrades of the story's title work in a factory that is so secret that nobody knows the purpose of the spare part they produce. When asked where they work, the youths reply: '*v yashchike*' (i.e. 'in the box'—because the factory has no address, only a PO box number).

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V kruge pervom (both 1968), have exploited the scope of the genre to provide historical and social perspectives for purposes directly counter to those of socialist realism. These three novels in the grand tradition could not, therefore, be published in the Soviet Union because their authors deliberately set out to show that the whole Soviet interlude was an aberration (indeed, in Pasternak's view, the result of a *counter*-revolution) whose cost in human sacrifice and moral degradation has already negated its aims.

A further blow to the doctrine of socialist realism has been the virtual defection of some of the old Fellow Travellers whose earlier work is still held up as a model: Ehrenburg, Katayev, and Leonov have written works (also short ones, of *povest* length!) in which they go back on the romantic illusions (to describe them charitably) which once earned them their place in the socialist realist canon.[17]

AT the Fifth Congress of Soviet Writers, held in June 1971, there was ample recognition in several speeches that the essential demand of socialist realism has not been met in the practice of Soviet prose during the sixties. Fedin's successor as First Secretary of the Union, G. M. Markov, repeated the usual assurances that socialist realism is 'our only artistic method' and that the distinctive feature of Soviet literature is its 'unitary ideological and artistic sense of purpose (*ustremlyonnost*)'. He also maintained, no doubt mainly for the benefit of Brezhnev and the other high Party and government guests sitting behind him in the seats of honour, that 'literature has become *even more* [author's emphasis] imbued with a sense of historical optimism and insight into the social prospects of mankind'. But, in a manner typical of Soviet rhetoric, this assurance was belied in the later part of his report, when he came to a more concrete review of the present situation: 'If we are to sum up all the various shades of dissatisfaction with the state of contemporary literature, then, in our view, they add up to the fact that Soviet man of the sixties and beginning of the seventies has not yet been depicted in all the fullness of his historical deeds and high purpose.' In other words, as Markov implies in another passage of his speech, the purposeful sense of historical mission no longer finds embodiment in the sort of 'classical' heroes who formerly provided such inspiration: Pavel Vlasov (in Gorky's *Mat*), Chapayev, Chumalov (in Gladkov's *Tsement*), Korchagin (in Ostrovsky's *Kak zakalyalas stal*), Davydov (in Sholokhov's *Podnyataya tselina*), Meresyev (in Polevoi's *Povest o nastoyashchem cheloveke*), the Young Guards, and the Zhurbin family (in Kochetov's novel of this name). The only hero of a post-Stalin Russian novel whom he finds worthy of inclusion in this roster is Baluyev, from the novel *Znakomtes, Baluyev* (1960), by V. Kozhevnikov, the editor of *Znamya*.

[17] I have discussed the works in question in my *Themes and Variations in Soviet Literature*.

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As the Russian proverb says: 'When there are no men, even Foma is a nobleman. . . .'

One of the conservative speakers at the Congress, Nikolai Gribachev —without breaking the evident unspoken agreement to avoid name-calling—was more explicit about the general sense of a loss of purpose in the prose of the last decade or so: 'In the recent past our prose has been in a visibly precarious state. In the treatment of the war, the main emphasis has been on human suffering, which has overshadowed [the theme of] principled resistance to fascism . . . in the treatment of the countryside there has also been constant emphasis—also in a "suffering" vein—only on the difficulties and excesses of collectivization, in the artificial playing-up of which you lose sight of the self-sacrificing deeds of communists, class-conscious peasants and workers, and even of the historical inevitability of collectivization itself. . . .' Having denounced such writing as the 'bearing of historical false-witness', Gribachev then noted signs for the better in recent works—most of them on the wartime theme which lends itself most readily to the depiction of heroes—by Anatoli Ananyev, Yuri Bondarev, Alexander Chakovsky (editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*), Ivan Stadnyuk, and the Uzbek writer, Askad Mukhtar.[18] Few of Gribachev's listeners can have found this evidence of the resurgence of socialist realism very heartening.

(It was left to the Kirghiz writer, Chingiz Aitmatov—one of the few Central Asian writers who refuses to join the pathetic *claque* from which the Moscow conservatives expect moral support at literary gatherings—to defend by name some of the leading representatives of the trend denounced by Gribachev. He said that Nagibin, Tendryakov, Kazakov, and Aksyonov had done 'excellent work' in Soviet prose and that Vasili Bykov had been subjected to 'one-sided criticism'. His criterion for excellence in prose is a touchingly simple one: 'I dream of seeing in the pages of our press a story after reading which I cannot sleep at night. There were times when this happened fairly often . . . this was in the days of Gorky, Chekov, Bunin, and Kuprin. . . . .' It is clear that Aitmatov is not robbed of his sleep by the reading of Ananyev, Chakovsky, and the others.)

On the evidence of the speeches representing various points of view at the Writers' Congress one might well conclude that socialist realism in the traditional sense has now become a minority trend in such Soviet prose as merits the name of literature (this is to stretch a point in favour of Chakovsky, Kozhevnikov, Mikhail Alekseyev, Lipatov, and others in the conservatives' 'approved list'). A fascinating development in the last few years is that the prose of some of the leading Stalinists, whose work can scarcely be regarded as literature (and is not uninfluenced,

[18] Yuri Bondarev is the author of an anti-Stalinist novel, *Tishina* (*Novy mir*, 1962), but he has found favour with the conservatives for his later novels on the war, during which he served as an artillery officer. Ivan Stadnyuk is the author of *Lyudi ne angely*, a novel about collectivization which gives a horrifying picture of the resulting famine. Nevertheless, he is careful to vindicate the policy as such.

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incidentally, by the Western trash they affect to abominate), also betrays a radical departure from socialist realism. This is evident in Kochetov's *Chego zhe ty khochesh* (*Oktyabr*, Nos. 9, 10, 11, 1969), Oles Benyukh's priceless *Chelyusti saranchi* (*Oktyabr*, No. 1, 1969), and Ivan Shevtsov's *Lyubov i nenavist* (*Voenizdat*, 1970—in 200,000 copies!). The candid message of these masterpieces of *kitsch* is that, far from marching on to even greater heights, the country is going to the dogs and will continue to do so until the political leadership pulls itself together. These novels are in fact an expression of right-wing dissidence which reflects and plays on the nostalgia of countless *apparatchiki* for the good old days. There are indications that the Party leadership (including Brezhnev himself) fears this Stalinist longing for a 'strong hand' even more than it does opposition from the Left, which is numerically weaker and hence much more vulnerable. An important consequence of this growth of oppositionist Stalinism is that the Party still clings to the 'centrist' policy inherited from Khrushchev (but without his violent lurchings from one side to another). It is only thus that one can explain why the 'liberal' view got some sort of hearing at the Writers' Congress (from Aitmatov, Evtushenko, Simonov) and why Voznesensky and Evtushenko were elected to the new presidium (though both they and the extreme Right, as represented by Kochetov, were excluded from the more powerful secretariat, whose 'centrist' behaviour is thus guaranteed). It is also the only way to explain the continuing balance between the literary journals which have come to be identified with the opposing factions—this despite the departure of Tvardovsky from *Novy mir*. The latest authoritative statement of a 'centrist' policy came from Brezhnev himself at the 24th Party Congress. It was quoted by Markov at the Writers' Congress and incorporated in the final resolution: 'Some people have tried to reduce the manysidedness of contemporary Soviet reality to a few problems irrevocably consigned to the past by the Party's work in overcoming the consequences of the cult of personality. The opposite extreme, current among certain other writers, is represented by attempts to whitewash phenomena of the past that have been subjected to decisive and principled Party criticism, to preserve concepts and views which run counter to the new, creative [spirit] introduced by the Party into its practical and theoretical activities in the last few years.' Translated into plainer language this means that the condemnation of Stalin at the 20th Congress is still endorsed by the Party leadership, but that his legacy must neither be harped on by the diehards nor represented in too favourable a light by the 'liberals'. In other words, extremes must be avoided.[19]

[19] The message has since been hammered home in more specific terms. N. Iovchuk, in his article *Sovremennye problemy ideologicheskoi borby* (*Kommunist*, October 1971), writes: 'The Party press and literary public opinion have condemned the one-sided and erroneous approach to previous periods of history—for example, the mistakes permitted at one time in the journal *Novy mir*, where too much emphasis was put on the so-called "camp theme", attempts were made under the flag of "deheroicization"

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When it comes to poetry, the declining relevance of socialist realist theory to what is actually published in the Soviet Union appears even more striking. As suggested earlier, socialist realism is by its very nature inhospitable to lyric poetry, and the extraordinary explosion of verse after Stalin's death can be seen in retrospect as a spontaneous reaction to it and all it stood for. Nadezhda Mandelstam has spoken in *Hope against Hope* about the revival of poetry as the outward sign of a certain spiritual emancipation among the young. Voznesensky made the same point in his long poem *Oza* (*Molodaya Gvardiya*, No. 10, 1964): 'Why, when we pack the Luzhniki, Do we crave verse like a cure for scurvy, Our souls bursting shyly forth like buds? . . .' There is little in the poetry of Akhmadulina, Sosnora, Yunna Morits, Novella Matveyeva, Kushner, Gleb Gorbovsky, Soloukhin, Vinokurov, D. Samoilov, let alone in the unpublished Brodsky, that can give any comfort to the custodians of socialist realism. The only exception among the younger poets is perhaps Robert Rozhdestvensky—it is difficult to think of anyone else who combines a certain formal skill with almost uniformly 'correct' sentiments.[20] The long epic poem which formerly sometimes met the aims of socialist realism in verse has now become the almost exclusive preserve of the *kitsch*-mongers, who use it in the same spirit and for the same purposes as Kochetov and Shevtsov do the novel (e.g. S. V. Smirnov's *Svidetelstvuyu sam*, *Moskva*, No. 10, 1967).[21] On the other hand, a genuine epic poet like Tvardovsky, who once made important contributions to the sparse canon of socialist realist verse (*Strana Muravia*, 1936; *Vasili Tyorkin*, 1941–45; *Dom u dorogi*, 1946), has turned to lyrical poetry in recent years: *Iz liriki etikh let* (1967),[22] and particularly the moving cycle of poems in *Novy mir* of January 1969,

to denigrate the heroism of Soviet soldiers, and in certain works, such as *Matryonin dvor* and *Iz zhizni Fyodora Kuzhina*, the kolkhoz village was painted in dark and unrelievedly gloomy colours. . . . At the 24th Party Congress it was also noted that . . . there have been attempts to whitewash the phenomena of the past. . . . Certain works (such as, for example, the not-unknown compositions of I. Shevtsov . . . and a few others) display lack of faith in the Soviet intelligentsia and youth, and a peculiar nostalgia for those phenomena of the past connected with arbitrary rule.'

20 Rozhdestvensky also occasionally writes propaganda pieces which sound odd coming from a poet of his generation. See, for example, his note on Brezhnev's visit to France: *Vo imya budushchego* (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 3 November 1971).

21 This contains the following extraordinary comment on the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel:

> 'I can positively say
> —It's plain as plain could be—
> That the notion of "Fifth Column"
> Is still topical today,
> And while such creatures stink,
> Appealing to the country's foes,
> Weaken not nor wither,
> Dear dictatorship of ours!'

22 *Iz liriki etikh let* was awarded the State prize in literature for 1971 (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 10 November). This, considering Tvardovsky's sponsorship of one of the extremes denounced at the 24th Party Congress, must be seen as a sop to the 'Liberals'.

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which convey a poignant sense of disillusionment in a man of outstanding courage and sensitivity. (They also contain an oblique expression of sorrow—probably the only one to appear in print in the Soviet Union—at the invasion of Czechoslovakia.) Tvardovsky's sequel to his wartime epic on Vasili Tyorkin (*Vasili Tyorkin na tom svete*) circulated in manuscript for several years before being allowed to appear in print [23] thanks to an impulsive gesture on the part of Khrushchev; it cannot be said that it fulfils the first condition of a socialist realist work, an affirmative attitude to the future prospects of mankind under socialism. The same is true of the occasional long poems written by lyrical poets. Voznesensky's *Oza* is a lament about our destiny under the heel of modern technology (whether communist or capitalist makes little difference), and Evtushenko's two epics, *Bratskaya GES* (begun in 1964) and his offering on the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, *Kazanskii Universitet* (*Novy mir*, No. 4, 1970), were denounced by his critics as ideologically ambiguous. Thus, if genuine lyrical poetry is now (as it always has been) beyond the ken of socialist realism, narrative poetry, once its special province, is also slipping outside its terms of reference.

IN conclusion, then, it is evident that the development of Soviet literature over the last 18 years has led to the slow dissolution of Soviet literary theory. The main reason—apart from the erosion of administrative control over literary practice—has been the inner weakness of basing it not on an aesthetic principle, but on an ideological one subject to changing political requirements. The canon used to substantiate the theory was held together only by this principle, not by any literary method or quality shared by the writers in question. The basic weakness of socialist realism was further underlined by its inability to accommodate poetry (this has proved particularly damaging in view of the eclipse of prose—Solzhenitsyn apart—by poetry in the post-Stalin years) and by the fact that the best work included in the canon antedated the birth of the doctrine. Much of this work (the early novels of Leonov, the first two books of Sholokhov's *Tikhii Don*, etc.) begins to look more as though it belongs in the company of some of the 'grey zone' and even 'hostile' writing, a good deal of which has been re-published in the last decade after the rehabilitation of its authors. Ovcharenko's proposed modifications to the theory even allow for the possibility of detaching the early novels of some of the Fellow Travellers from the old canon. This would leave socialist realism only with those works it can legitimately lay claim to: *Kak zakalyalas stal*, Kochetov's *Zhurbiny*, and to all that vast corpus of later Stalinist writing whose function, as Vera Dunham has shown in her fascinating study of it, was to propagate a system of values for the class that Stalin knew he had to create in order to perpetuate his rule. This class still exists and its tastes are extensively

[23] In *Izvestia*, 18 August 1965. It appeared anonymously a little earlier in the *emigré* journal *Mosty* (10 August 1963).

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catered for by a redoubtable army of graphomanes who produce the requisite para-literature for popular consumption. They received their marching orders at the Fifth Writers' Congress from G. N. Markov:

> There is no doubt that the writers will deepen their interest in the activity of the production collectives, the life of workers in factories, construction sites and electric stations. They will closely study the transformation of agricultural activity, the formation of new features in the village toiler, the historical process of *rapprochement* between town and country, the conversion of the peasant's toil into a form of industrial work. . . . Our literature has particular obligations towards the men of the Soviet Army and Navy. . . . Writers have created many vivid works about the heroic past of the Komsomol, but the feats of the present-day Komsomol still await their proper depiction in literature . . . ,

and so on.

This may be socialist realism, but is it literature? [24]

[24] Since this paper was written there have been signs of an attempt to 'restore discipline' on the ideological front. Recent pressure on *samizdat*, the arrest of Bukovsky, are reportedly part of a concerted drive launched in accordance with a Central Committee resolution at the end of 1971. A plenum of the Union of Writers in February 1972 discussed the need to strengthen *partiinost* and develop the 'fruitful traditions of socialist realism'. It will require more than this kind of pressure to halt the decline of socialist realism described above (indeed, it can only accelerate it), but it is probable that there will be increased administrative and censorship restrictions on the writers for a time.

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Literary Conflicts in the 1920s

Robert A. Maguire

'EITHER the world is something fragmentary and self-contradictory, or it is a unitary whole.' This was Vissarion Belinsky's statement of a famous problem in the history of ideas: the general and the particular.[1] It has been especially tenacious in Russia; indeed, V. V. Zenkovsky thinks that it may well be the chief concern of Russian philosophy.[2] Of course it is implicit in any attempt to make sense of the world, whether in art, science, politics, or philosophy; but at certain times, especially, it would seem, during periods of great social upheaval, it becomes explicit. The 1920s were such a period in Soviet Russia; and it was in literature, then the most vigorous expression of culture, that the problem emerged in highest relief. To what extent, people asked, should literature concern itself with general statements or propositions, and to what extent with specific ones of local or temporary import? Is literature primarily a record of thoughts, feelings, and experiences common to all men, regardless of race, nationality, or class? Or has it to do, rather, with the particularities of time, place, and situation, which merely reflect (if at all) more general ideas? If it is a blend of the general and the particular, then what is the relative importance or weight of each? The problem is particularly interesting in the 1920s because it had not only a theoretical dimension, but was also reflected in the development of the forms and styles of literature. The purpose of this paper is to outline the problem, both in theory and in practice, and to suggest some of its implications for Soviet literature during the 1920s and later.

SHORTLY after the end of the Civil War, in 1921, a number of new writers began to appear in print. It was soon obvious that the most interesting of them were the so-called Fellow Travellers, those who, in Trotsky's famous definition, accepted the revolution as an unblinkable fact and more or less sympathized with its aims, but were not themselves communists.[3] The most prominent and influential among them were Boris Pilnyak, Nikolai Nikitin, and Vsevolod Ivanov. Theirs was pre-eminently an art of particulars. Its chief characteristics were: (1) small, often fragmentary forms, such as the short story, the sketch, the vignette; (2) a focus on the surface of the physical world; (3) the

[1] As quoted in V. V. Zenkovsky, *Istoriya russkoi filosofii*, I (Paris, n.d.), p. 273. The problem has been extensively studied in English literature. Cf. e.g. Scott Elledge, 'The Background and Development in English Criticism of the Theories of Generality and Particularity', *PMLA*, XLII, No. 1 (March 1947), pp. 147–82.

[2] *Istoriya russkoi filosofii*, I, esp. p. 19.

[3] *Literature and Revolution* (New York, 1957), Ch. IV.

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representation of this world as petty, sordid, and so fragmented as to be immune to any attempt to organize or interpret it; (4) a view of man as a will-less and purposeless creature, standing alone in a cruel, impersonal, and incomprehensible universe; (5) a language which resembled an anthology, selected randomly, of 'literary' and 'non-literary' styles; (6) a refusal to make generalizations and explicit evaluations. No one writer, of course, exemplified all these tendencies at all times; but more than one can be seen in nearly every work written by the Fellow Travellers during the early 1920s.

These writers, we might say, had taken the world apart and were refusing to put the pieces back together again. Some Marxist critics registered strong protests, insisting that reality was coherent and whole, but that the Fellow Travellers, being the artistic and ideological heirs of 'decadent' writers of an older generation (notably Remizov and Bely), could not perceive it.[4] At the outset, however, the best and most influential Marxists regarded the art of the Fellow Travellers as being highly 'realistic'. If it was fragmented, then it merely reflected the reality of a society shattered by war. If it was preoccupied with sordid details, then this was a healthy counterpoise to the abstractness of much of the work being done by proletarian writers.[5] And these critics had the tacit backing of the Party, which, while officially declining to express a preference for any particular style of writing, nonetheless gave much encouragement to the Fellow Travellers by way of promoting the rapid growth of a prestigious new literature.

So it was, at any rate, for the first two or three years of the new decade. But beginning around 1923, murmurs of discontent were heard from even the staunchest supporters of the Fellow Travellers. The specifics of life must be recorded: that was granted. But had not the time come for a larger view? The revolution had entered a new phase: it was no longer destroying, but building. Yet where were the builders among the writers? Why were young persons of talent 'drowning in ordinary life [*byt*], in empty ethnography, in playing on the reader's nerves with elements which basically have no immediate relevance to art [. . .]. The habits and practices of one person definitely cannot be equivalent to [the whole] person'.[6] What were the new criteria, then? Alexander Voronsky, the editor of the journal *Red Virgin Soil* and an enthusiastic supporter of the Fellow Travellers, described them as follows:

> There have been a great many themes—but there has been no *one theme*. There have been a great many heroes—but there has been no *one hero*. People have written about a great many astonishing,

[4] e.g. G. Lelevich, 'Nam nuzhna partiinaya liniya', *Na postu*, No. 1 (1923), pp. 102–08; I. Vardin, 'Voronshchinu neobkhodimo likvidirovat', *Na postu*, No. 1 (1924), pp. 9–36.

[5] e.g. V. Bryusov, 'Vchera, segodnya i zavtra russkoi poezii', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Sept.–Oct. 1922), p. 63.

[6] S. Bobrov, review of A. Grin, *Alye parusa*, in *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 3 (Apr.–May 1923), p. 261.

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> amusing and sad events—but there has been nothing about *one event*; just as in a cinema, thousands of types of human faces have flashed before us—but there has been no *one type*. Our writers have presented thousands of small details, they have crawled about in all the most remote and tiny corners, they have told us about astonishing and unheard-of things, and they have constantly left out, forgotten something important.[7]

This was a view that virtually all Marxists came to share by the middle of the 1920s. As a statement of Marxist priority, it is not in itself surprising. But it did not describe what the best fiction was all about for a substantial part of the decade. The Marxist critics had a good deal of power: supposedly they could see where the truth lay, and they had been licensed, so to speak, by the Party, to show the writers this truth and persuade them to reflect it in their work. But as critics, they needed the stuff of literature on which to operate; and in the 1920s, the Fellow Travellers, besides being the best writers, also offered graphic evidence that the new regime was friendly to talent and originality. The Fellow Travellers, in turn, could say pretty much what they pleased in that permissive decade, provided they did not take the Party or the government to task. But they needed the Marxist critics as a means of entrée into the important journals and publishing houses. In other words, the critics were moving one way, and the best writers another. To a great extent, the history of Soviet Russian literature in the 1920s reflects the competing claims of critic and writer, or of generalist and particularist.

FROM the very outset of Soviet rule, loud and anguished debate raged around the question of the role which the past was to play in the new order of things. Frequently explicit and always implicit here was the problem of the general and the particular. As P. S. Kogan said:

> When the revolution begins to build, it is compelled to pick up the fragments of the chain of the old world it has shattered and link them, because it does not possess and cannot devise its own instruments of coercion, for it is forging only the cause of freedom.[8]

But inasmuch as these had been 'bourgeois' chains, were not the 'fragments' tainted? A few people thought so, and talked about erasing history to make a fresh start. But these were a small minority, who were deemed eccentrics by most of their Marxist *confrères*. It was generally agreed that the past could be of some use. The Futurists and radical proletarians regarded the literature of bourgeois society as so much 'material' which could be appropriated by the proletariat and fashioned to its own purposes. To think otherwise, they argued, was to think bourgeois; for the bourgeoisie, lacking a coherent philosophy,

[7] A. Voronsky, 'Na perevale', *Krasnaya nov*, No. 6 (1923), p. 315.
[8] 'Alexander Blok i revolyutsiya', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 2 (Aug.–Oct. 1921), p. 6.

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had broken the world into fragments and had endowed each fragment with an eternal and absolute value. Its literature was graphic proof: 'A few elements were torn from the whole world of nature and of things and a special aesthetic significance was attached to them'—such as 'gold' (betokening luxury), 'stars' and 'sun' (standing for transcendent beauty), and so on.[9] 'Material', the argument ran, is actually neutral: it has no value, indeed no reality until it is subordinated to a general idea, which brings about a 'fundamental transformation'.[10] Inasmuch as this 'idea' at the time was proletarian, it was by definition whole and complete in itself. Presumably, therefore, it made no difference *what* was presented in a work of literature: 'It is not so much a matter of the choice of themes from the life of a definite class as of the predominant mood of the work.'[11] The same line of argument was applied to language as well: 'Language is the material of poetry', and 'this material can and must be worked over by poets in accordance with the aims of artistic creativity'.[12] Hence the creation of a new language appropriate to the new age was a matter of 'learning in detail how to distinguish all those innumerable little screws and nuts that make up the machine of language', and how to 'take this machine apart and put it back together again, replacing the parts that have proved to be worthless'.[13]

Most Marxists joined in disapproving 'the habit of regarding things as possessing immovable and unchangeable qualities', but refused to grant that 'things' were neutral or inert matter which had no reality until it was subjected to 'organization': like everything in the world, individual 'things' were themselves 'in movement, in development'.[14] In the context of literature, this suggested that the 'meaning' of ideas and words must change according to the sociological context in which they were employed by the writer or perceived by the reader. As V. Polonsky phrased it:

> *It is only in a reader of his own class that the artist is capable—by means of art's 'infectiousness'—of evoking the same order of ideas* and attitudes that he has striven for. But when a reader who belongs to a class that is hostile to the writer is infected with the images of that writer's art, he is capable of *investing these images*

[9] B. Arvatov, 'Esteticheskii fetishizm', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 3 (Apr.–May 1923), p. 91.

[10] B. Arvatov, 'Na putyakh k proletarskomu iskusstvu', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1922), p. 66. This echoes A. Bogdanov's theory of 'techtology' (*tektologiya*); for a convenient discussion of this, cf. Zenkovsky, op. cit. II, 282–83.

[11] G. Lelevich, 'V. V. Vorovsky i ocherednye problemy marksistskoi literaturnoi kritiki', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 3 (May 1925), p. 78.

[12] V. Bryusov, 'Vchera, segodnya i zavtra russkoi poezii', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Sept.–Oct. 1922), p. 55. Original italics omitted.

[13] G. Vinokur, 'Kultura yazyka', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5 (Aug.–Sept. 1923), p. 106.

[14] A. Lezhnev, 'Literaturnye zametki', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 8 (Dec. 1925), pp. 122–23. Later this Proletkult view of reality was officially condemned.

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> *with a different content*, different thoughts, ideas and attitudes than those which the writer intended to evoke in the reader.[15]

The Bolshevik revolutionaries, for example, were brought up on the Russian classics, yet became revolutionaries all the same.[16] As Polonsky went on to develop his argument, it began to sound very much like the 'techtological' line put forth by the Proletkult, even though the controlling image was perhaps more that of the fitter than of the shaper.

> The proletariat, by virtue of its class psychology, by virtue of its special position in society, which has determined the particular contours of its feelings and thought, is not only deaf and blind as concerns everything which is the holy of holies of the decaying bourgeoisie, but even more: it is capable, because of its class prism, of extracting from bourgeois art that which 'comes in handy'. This precisely is what explains the situation that all the literature of the past—feudal, aristocratic, bourgeois—was an orchard on whose fruits the proletariat fed, with benefit for itself: it threw away the rotten fruits and took only the sound ones.[17]

At first glance, such a view of literature and the past, though conditioned by a 'generalist' ideology, leaves ample room for specifics. This, however, was not the case. Far more influential was the feeling that details, or 'things', were neither neutral nor entirely shaped by the forces of society, but rather, had a life and power of their own which made them to some extent independent and therefore dangerous. This is why G. Lelevich, a staunch Octobrist and a devotee of the proposition that art must 'organize' reality, could seriously argue that even though ideologies which had produced the art of the past were long since gone, this art nonetheless retained its power to infect, and was therefore pernicious and dangerous to the proletariat: the gargoyles of Notre Dame, for instance, were steeped in the values of medieval society.[18] Others discovered that most of the proletarian poets were using imagery lifted straight from 'decadent' or 'bourgeois' verse of the past, and—controlling ideas aside—worried about the possibility of taint. Had not Plekhanov himself pointed out that a writer's ideology and his imagery might contradict each other?

[15] 'K voprosu o nashikh literaturnykh raznoglasiyakh', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 4 (June 1925), p. 64.

[16] Ibid. p. 63.

[17] Ibid. p. 66. 'Proletkult' is an abbreviation for 'Proletarian Cultural and Educational Organizations' (*Proletarskiye kulturno-prosvetitelnye organizatsii*), which was founded in 1917 and was devoted to the creation of a new literature by and for the proletariat. Its leading theoretician was A. Bogdanov. Such arguments were applied not only to art, but to all areas of culture. Cf. e.g. V. Polonsky, 'Zametki o kulture i nekulturnosti', *Krasnaya nov*, No. 3 (1923), esp. pp. 272–74; V. I. Nevsky, 'Sovetskaya nauka', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 3 (Apr.–May 1925), pp. 105–06.

[18] 'Nashi literaturnye raznoglasiya', *Zvezda*, No. 3 (1924), pp. 282–84. The Octobrists were members of 'October' (*Oktyabr*), the most important group of proletarian writers and critics in the 1920s. A successor to the Proletkult, it championed the creation of a militant and exclusive proletarian literature. Its major journal was *On Guard* (*Na postu*).

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This uneasiness in the face of physical reality is characteristic of Soviet Marxism. It also goes well back into Russian thought. Belinsky, for example, at one point in his career, believed that 'the objective world is dreadful'.[19] For Bakunin: 'Everyday life is a most dreadful spectre, which binds us with trivial yet powerful and invisible fetters.'[20] The works of Gogol offer the most striking literary version of this view. Against it has pulled the tendency to accept visible reality, and either discover in each particular manifestation of it the presence of an eternal idea (as did Belinsky early in his career), or to undertake what V. V. Zenkovsky has called the 'sanctification of life' (*osvyashcheniye zhizni*),[21] the readiest recent example being perhaps Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. But I would suggest that this second impulse has not struck so deeply into the Russian mind as the first, which, while acknowledging the existence of the visible world, regards it as but a partial, even chaotic, version of real reality. The tendency, then, has been to fear and even reject this unreal world so that the other world can be seen; and this tendency is fully visible in Soviet Marxism of the 1920s.

Marxists regarded reality as an organic whole, and insisted that this whole was not merely the sum of its parts. If it were broken down and examined, piece by piece, then, like a living organism once dismembered, it could not be reassembled. Although most Marxists rejected Bogdanov's theory that matter, as such, is inert, and can be brought to life only when organized by a powerful general idea, one suspects that many of them were more sympathetic to Bogdanov's ideas than they were willing to admit. No doubt the widespread pessimism engendered by the New Economic Policy had much to do with reinforcing these feelings: many thought that the 'general' idea of the revolution had become mired in the very prosaic particulars of reconstruction, especially when so much of this building work seemed to have been entrusted to individuals with less than impeccable proletarian credentials. It was a mood that P. S. Kogan had forecast as early as 1921:

> The soul of the revolution is moving back into its deep sources and concealing itself there [. . . the revolutionary idea] is losing its magical light. . . . Those who have been martyrs have against their own will become masters, those who have been destroyers have become officials. Their passion has begun to burn slowly and evenly, their inspiration is becoming settled, their enthusiasm—latent.[22]

The best literature of the 1920s thrived on the gloomy mood of the times: the world had no sense, no meaning, no purpose, no over-arching plan, the revolution had all been in vain, nothing had changed. Most Marxists publicly denied such sentiments (though quite a few did resign from the

[19] As quoted in Zenkovsky, op. cit. I, p. 273.
[20] Ibid. pp. 256–57.
[21] Ibid. p. 63.
[22] 'Alexander Blok i revolyutsiya', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 2 (Aug.–Oct. 1921), pp. 5–6.

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Party), and demanded that art do so too; but perhaps the line between the affirmation of an aesthetic stance and the denial of a private uncertainty was not always easy to draw.

BUT was there really any place for art in the new society? Was it by its nature capable of accommodating the general truths of history? Did it not represent a specialization (and an esoteric one at that), which offered only a partial and therefore fragmented picture of the world? B. Arvatov had this to say about science—but his remarks were applicable to art as well:

> The Proletkult organizations have made it their job . . . to expose and overcome the specialized one-sidedness, individualism and scholastic abstractness of bourgeois science, with its quest for abstract truths or, on the contrary, the sterile scepticism of its relativistic view of things . . . out of which it has made a kind of absolute. The goal of the Proletkult organizations is the creation of unified and integral scientific methods which have a vital link with the labour experiences of mankind. . . .[23]

Such sentiments echoed a hostility toward specialization which had been building up throughout the nineteenth century and had come to a climax at about the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. As early as 1844, V. F. Odoyevsky, writing in *Russian Nights* (*Russkiye nochi*) observed that science in the West had split into so many different disciplines that it had lost its unity and its wholeness. Some of the most eloquent pages of Marx's *Capital* describe the dehumanizing effects of specialization in contemporary industrial society. Before long, Russians were making the same point about their own society; and by the beginning of the twentieth century this idea had become an obsession. Probably its most effective exponents were the Symbolists, who found contemporary civilization, as the product largely of science and reason, a fraud, and saw art as the only means by which man could re-establish a vital, full and integral relationship with the forces of life. Science was capable of knowing 'only isolated orders of phenomena'; but man has within him 'another knowledge, which is integral and higher' and finds clear expression only in art. The artist—a 'chosen one'—is different in that 'he sees into his spirit more distinctly than other men, and affirms more confidently than they the whole picture of a *perfect* world'.[24]

As far as Marxists were concerned, however, the art of the Symbolists, being esoteric and recondite, was itself a speciality which was capable of grasping only 'isolated orders of phenomena'. Any insights the 'chosen' artist might have into 'higher' planes of existence were private; he was blind to the whole of reality in its organic unity. To the

[23] 'Na putyakh k proletarskomu iskusstvu', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1922), p. 67.

[24] M. Gershenzon, in *Videniye poeta*, as quoted by V. Bryusov in his review of the book, *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 2 (Aug.–Oct. 1921), p. 202. Gershenzon was not a Symbolist, but he shared many of the same ideas.

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Marxist mind, such specialized art was characteristic of bourgeois society: it represented the culmination of a long process of the progressive 'isolation of artist-specialists' who had 'brought art into decline, into degeneration', and had thereby produced a 'split between art and the people'.[25]

It was taken for granted that no such 'split' would exist in the new Soviet society. For the writer would be attuned to the great general truths of history, as embodied in the Party and the masses, and would therefore have no need to create something intelligible only to himself and a small circle of kindred minds. 'Genius' and 'inspiration' had set the writer apart in bourgeois society; now (even though there was something called 'talent', which could not be precisely defined), the writer was basically like any other man.

But it was also taken for granted, by all except a small minority, that the continued existence of literature was inevitable, necessary, and desirable. What, however, should it do? Some thought that it was an activity which 'organizes in fiction that which is unorganized and therefore unmeasurable in life, yet is necessary to society'. Some insisted that it must 'infect' readers with socially desirable emotions and promote a sense of unity among them. A few believed that it should be frankly acknowledged as the handmaiden of propaganda, a means of presenting political and social goals in a more palatable form. Some sought to associate it with the 'emotional' side of life as distinct from the intellectual. Others sought its specific nature in the medium, trotting out the old Belinsky formula that literature is 'thinking in images', in contrast to science, which is thinking in 'concepts'.[26]

Only a few Marxists, however, ventured to suggest a definition which said, in effect: *this* is what literature and *nothing else* can do. One of them was Alexander Voronsky. In the later 1920s, he came to see literature as a means—indeed, the only means—of 'lifting the veils' of physical reality, or specific details, to reveal the world of real reality, or general truths. Since the happiness and well-being of man depended on a steady awareness of this world, literature, in effect, was the most 'real' of his activities.[27] This view met with determined opposition: it was called 'mystical', indifferent to the class struggle, and certain to assign to literature a unique and therefore highly specialized function.[28] Nearly all Marxists agreed that literature was chiefly concerned with generalities, and nearly all agreed on what those generalities were; but when it came to accounting for the particular qualities of literature, most shrank back.

[25] B. Arvatov, op. cit. p. 67.

[26] The first quotation in this paragraph is from B. Arvatov, 'Yazyk poeticheskii i yazyk prakticheskii', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Dec. 1923), p. 66; the Belinsky article in question is 'Vzglyad na russkuyu literaturu 1847 goda', *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii*, X (Moscow, 1956), p. 311.

[27] e.g. 'Iskusstvo videt mir'; 'Marsel Prust (K voprosu o psikhologii khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva)', both in *Iskusstvo videt mir* (Moscow, 1928), esp. pp. 84, 154.

[28] 'Litso nashikh protivnikov. A. Voronsky', *Na literaturnom postu*, No. 21–22 (1930), esp. pp. 4, 3.

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If the existence of literature was to be justified at all, some such accounting clearly had to be made; but it could not be so specific as to set literature apart from other activities of the mind. After all, general truths underlay everything, were greater than any individual embodiment of them, and greater too than the sum of all such embodiments. Even the attempt to define literature as thinking in 'images' amounted to a refusal to specify it; for it was impossible to arrive at a definition of the 'image' that all, or even a majority of Marxists, would find satisfactory. At bottom there was great reluctance to acknowledge that the language of literature was somehow different from other kinds of language. Few Marxists would accept the idea, which was being put forward by the Formalists, that the 'language of poetry' (literature) is qualitatively distinct from the 'language of prose' (ordinary discourse), and that the 'image' cannot be the distinguishing feature of literature.[29] Again B. Arvatov offered an extreme but by no means untypical statement of the problem:

> The poet is ceasing to make proclamations in a high-falutin, mannered, stilted language. The poet is beginning to speak in poetry the same way everyone speaks in daily life; the poet at last is finding a common language with the people around him, without carrying them out of reality into a sphere of substanceless emotional contemplation (the illusion of self-sufficient 'beauty'); rather, he is entering cooperatively into their life, with its social activity. In its very form, poetry is becoming socially utilitarian.[30]

All the signs, then, pointed towards a literature concerned primarily with general statements. The practical implications of this stance became evident rather soon.

LATE in the summer of 1923, the critic K. Loks made a survey of contemporary Russian literature for the journal *Press and Revolution*. He had a certain sensitivity to belles-lettres, and was convinced that the Russian classics could stand as models for beginning writers. He was also a Marxist; and his article is instructive for what it reveals of the biases of a critic who, by the standards of the time, was reasonable and tolerant. And it is a convenient anthology of the expectations of a typical 'generalist' of the 1920s.[31]

Loks builds his discussion around quotations from the works of three of the most representative and influential young writers of the day: Vsevolod Ivanov, Nikolai Nikitin, and Boris Pilnyak. All were Fellow Travellers; and even though Loks had a great deal of sympathy for such writers, he believed that they had gone astray. The key passage runs as follows:

[29] Cf. e.g. V. Shklovsky, 'Iskusstvo, kak priyom' (1917), in *Poetika, Sborniki po teorii poeticheskogo yazyka* (Petrograd, 1919).

[30] 'Sintaksis Mayakovskogo', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5 (Aug.–Sept. 1923); page references cited in text.

[31] 'Sovremennaya proza', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5 (Aug.–Sept. 1923); page references cited in text.

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> The loss of plot, the loss of a basic organizing principle, the chaotic succession of impressions, isolated patches, reality bordering on the fantastic—these are the basic characteristics of the new 'realism'. It is based on a naturalistic way of creating things, which is incompetent to cope with details and blows them up entirely out of proportion to their meaning and value (pp. 84–85).

Loks dislikes striking effects, violations of the reader's expectations (conditioned apparently by the Russian classics), and, in particular, excessive detail, which he considers 'completely unnecessary both for an understanding of and a feeling for the fullness of life' (p. 85). Here he includes dialect and slang (specialized languages of a sort), in which many young writers of the time were indulging themselves. And it is interesting to note that the passages he cites by way of illustration all contain a particular *kind* of detail: 'Artyusha took a drag on his cigarette, spat on the edge of the stool, and, wiping off the spit with his boot, said . . .' (Vsev. Ivanov, *Azure Sands*); 'You, you son of a bitch, have no right to such a revolution' (N. Nikitin, *Fort Vomit*); 'The soldier-girl went outdoors. On the other side of the thin earthen wall she could be heard defecating and chasing away a dog which had run up to eat her excrement' (B. Pilnyak, *Bare Year*). What offends Loks is not only the minutiae, but their dirtiness. Such things should 'be fought against with sanitation and elementary education, but they hardly need to be communicated in such a loving and painstaking way' (p. 85). In the context of the Marxist conviction that the particular is 'low' and 'lifeless', it is almost as if he is equating detail and dirtiness here. Certainly he is suggesting that such detail (and perhaps detail generally) does not belong in literature.

Andrei Bely comes in for a good deal of pounding in this same article. Loks regards the novel *Petersburg* as a prime specimen of the 'violation of all perspective' and 'a hysterical power of depicting things' (p. 83). That is, he objects to any heightening of effect that draws attention to itself or verges on the grotesque. Many of the younger writers of the day cherished just these qualities in Bely, and they are taken to task here: it is impossible, Loks argues, to lift materials or devices from other writers unless one subordinates them to a general, controlling vision of one's own. Otherwise the result is 'an intolerable melange of styles', and ultimately a 'decomposition of style and syntax', which is characteristic of 'mystical' writers like Bely (pp. 83–84). The fact that it was also characteristic of most of the younger contemporary writers suggested to him that they lacked a generalized outlook, and were wallowing in detail for detail's sake.

Unobtrusiveness, smoothness and stylistic unity, then, were made the marks of good writing. An organic metaphor seems to be at work here too. Loks believes that any piece of literature must have a 'plot' (*syuzhet*), which shows a clear beginning, middle, and end; otherwise 'any story could be continued to infinity or broken off on any page' (p. 84). He expresses no preference for any form or genre; but he does

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disapprove of the work of the so-called Serapion Brothers (to whom Ivanov and Nikitin had belonged), which he finds to be little more than a 'chain of anecdotes'.[32] Implied here is a predilection for larger forms which can best accommodate the capacious plots that Loks considers a mark of good writing. In fact, Loks was echoing what many of his contemporaries were beginning to say outright: the predominance of smaller, especially fragmentary forms must end; the time had come for larger, or, in the jargon of the time, 'monumental' forms. Nikolai Aseyev, for instance, spoke approvingly of the 'monumental quality' of the classic Russian writers (especially Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky), which 'took in and resolved, on a philosophical and artistic scale, the questions of being'. He then went on to trace, in Marxist terms, the course of this manner of writing:

> This 'majestic' literature, which served to cement and illuminate the internal contradictions of the dominant classes and their interrelations with the exploited classes, began, under the pressure of these contradictions, to fragment into individual literary currents which pursued their own, less significant purposes, in accordance with the detailed manifestations of decaying class life that could be seen. The monumental form of the leisurely narrative gave way to the short impressionistic story. Examples are Chekhov and Maupassant. They had no time to attempt a solution of the problems of mankind as a whole. They were compelled to concern themselves with the humdrum aspects of daily life. And the short, lightning-like thrust of the narrative became the most convenient kind of weapon in the struggle with the thousands of petty details which besieged the mind with the amusing, grotesque, and tragic details of a morbidly over-strained social organism.[33]

The association of 'monumental' forms, notably the novel, with periods of cultural vigour, and of short forms with periods of cultural decay is a commonplace of Marxist criticism in the 1920s. And the syllogism is not hard to make: a predominance of short forms is a sure sign that the literature of the time is in decay. Would any Marxist be willing to say that of Soviet Russia? The answer is obvious. The best case that could be made for the profusion of short forms in the 1920s was that they reflected the realities of a society shattered by civil war, fragmented into 'thousands of petty details', and characterized by 'amusing, grotesque and tragic details'—but they could not, of course, do service to the general idea which had found expression in the revolution. And of all the forms as yet devised, the most 'monumental', clearly, was the novel. That, as of 1924, no Soviet novel of any real quality had appeared was a cause for considerable worry to the critics: here, it seemed, was graphic

[32] p. 86. The Serapion Brothers (*Serapionovy Bratya*) were founded in 1921, and were dedicated to the proposition that literature could and should be free of political ideology. Evgeny Zamyatin was the mentor; important members included K. Fedin, Vs. Ivanov, M. Zoshchenko, N. Nikitin, V. Shklovsky, and V. Kaverin.

[33] 'Khudozhestvennaya literatura', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Sept.–Oct. 1922), p. 69.

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evidence that no new culture had as yet taken root. In an interesting way, this echoed a common theme of some 80 years before. Belinsky, the most influential critic of his age, had begun his career in a good Hegelian manner by holding up the drama (specifically the tragedy) as the supreme art.[34] But gradually he shifted allegiance to the novel, because it was more capacious and more versatile—more generalized, one might say; and, as novels of quality began to appear in Russia, he came to take them as symptoms of the growth of a truly national literature.[35] If we substitute 'Soviet' for 'national', Belinsky's sentiments can be transplanted into the 1920s. And they were shared by virtually all the Marxist critics of the time. Those gathered around the Futurist journal *LEF* and around the Octobrist *On Guard* were an exception: in their eyes, the novel was a typically 'bourgeois' form, and therefore had no place in the new society. But their opinions were not particularly influential.[36]

The same preference for the monumental and the general extended to literary theory and criticism. The most spectacular and original work of the time was being done by the Formalists. Marxists disapproved of them for many reasons, among which was their habit of concentrating upon the small, individual unit in the language of a text. It was taken for granted that because the Formalists were not Marxists, they lacked a 'general' or 'organic' view of literature, and were therefore doomed to flounder in a morass of fragmented observations. Formalism, it was agreed, could conceivably serve as one of the techniques which a Marxist might employ in establishing the data of his researches, but it could not be called criticism in any higher (i.e. Marxist) sense, precisely because it could not speak to larger realities.[37]

AS the 1920s wore on, Marxists became increasingly aware that they lacked a critical system which would account for both the specific details and the general statements in a literary text. Yet they confidently assumed that such a system would soon emerge from the tangled and contentious discussions about the nature and purpose of literature. Since everyone agreed that it must be 'sociological' (Marxist), its general presumptions were already known. But there was no agreement at all on the ways in which presumptions could be translated into specific techniques that would accommodate those elements of the text which somehow resisted classification according to the comfortably familiar 'general' truths of the Marxist ideology. Would it not be possible to *begin* with an immanent analysis of a work—a description of lexicon, rhythms, syntax, structure, etc.—and

[34] Cf. e.g. 'Literaturnye mechtaniya' (1834), *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii*, I (Moscow, 1953), pp. 32–33.

[35] 'Vzglyad na russkuyu literaturu 1847 goda', op. cit. X (Moscow, 1956), pp. 315–16.

[36] Cf. e.g. G. Lelevich, 'Otkazyvaemsya li my ot nasledstva?', *Na Postu*, No. 2–3 (1925), p. 55.

[37] Cf. *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5 (1924), for an interesting symposium on Formalism and Marxism.

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somehow *end* with a sociological interpretation of these data? The first phase dismantled the work and regarded each piece 'statically'; whereas the final great synthesis, being Marxist, had of course to account for the dialectical movement of the work. Could the apparent contradiction between stasis and dynamics be overcome? Many writers on the subject thought so. For instance, P. Sakulin, an eminent professor of literature and a Marxist, foresaw no real problem:

> Close study on a static level in no way contradicts the logic of dialectical thinking. The fluid nature of phenomena must not be exaggerated. If a fact is given an absolute significance, then the researcher hereby dooms himself to virtual impotence: he will not succeed in capturing the outlines of incessantly changing phenomena; instead, the object will slip out of his field of vision. In order to prevent this from happening, the researcher mentally stops the movement, as it were, and takes that segment of it which he needs. In the area of literary phenomena, the scholar's situation is made easier by the fact that movement does not proceed with the lightning-like rapidity which would eliminate the possibility of making a static study. After a number of static conclusions are made, the characteristics of the dynamic process will emerge more distinctly.[38]

Others were not so sure, however, that the literary work, once dismantled, could be put back together again. Static analysis, one critic wrote, 'isolates, and while *appearing to have a purely visual clarity* of outline, in actuality it conceals the nature of the object'.[39] (The use of visual imagery with reference to particulars, and the suspicious attitude towards visual perception as something purely physical, are symptomatic of the prejudice which we have already characterized.) G. Lelevich put it even more strongly, in arguing for the primacy of the general ('content') over the particular ('form'): 'It is clear that the idea of the whole can be found in concrete images only after an analysis of this idea has been made.'[40] This view was shared by most Marxists. Particulars (or 'form') were regarded, in effect, as illustrations of a general truth which had already been discovered; and the inductive approach of the Formalists, which many Marxists had thought could be pressed into service as one 'technique' of analysis, met with wide disapproval and was eventually ignored.

'Immanent' analysis ran up against still another obstacle. It operated on the assumption that the work of literature was to some extent self-contained. As Sakulin put it, the 'content' of a work is 'a special creative world. . . . It [content] cannot be conceived of outside its embodiment in art, and therefore there is no danger that extra-

[38] 'Metodologicheskiye zadachi istorii literatury', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1925), p. 99.

[39] I. Grossman-Roshchin, 'Kazualnyi i evolyutsionnyi ryady v postroenii metodologii istorii literatury', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5–6 (July–Sept. 1925), p. 82.

[40] 'K voprosu o metodologicheskikh zadachakh istorika literatury', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5–6 (July–Sept. 1925), p. 86.

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aesthetic factors will be introduced into it. But if this is done, then it ought to be done with the full awareness that one is stepping outside the sphere of art into the sphere of empirical activity, with which art is indubitably linked.' And, contemplating the larger context of literary history, Sakulin insists that 'there is something that makes [poetry] poetry everywhere and at all times; poetry has a nature of its own, in which certain *organic laws of development* are inherent'. The critic must find this immanently unfolding 'substratum' in each work before he can consider 'causal' factors such as history, society, and the like. 'Causality', Sakulin says, 'influences, determines; without knowing what is being determined, we cannot, however, properly understand the results of this influence.'[41]

Statements of this kind agitated many Marxists. Could it really be that an 'organism' like literature could develop '*regardless of* the natural milieu'?[42] After all, 'Life is a *unitary process.* "Superstructures"—including literature—*grow directly* out of the soil of economics (although they are joined to it with roots which sometimes twist into rather fanciful shapes). The least talk about literature's *inner capacity for development* is absolutely *not correct, not scientific, and not in accord with reality.*'[43]

Sakulin's views were shared by other Marxists, to be sure. But none of them was willing to develop, much beyond vague statements, the notion that literature, in a very important sense, is independent of time, geography, class, and history. This remains an unexplored problem in Marxist criticism to this day. It is recognized that literature is in some way *sui generis*; but the fear of making it too particular, at the expense of its general nature, has proved decisive; and critics, by and large, have been content to regard individual works as paraphrases of the general truisms of Marxism. As Lelevich put it, the 'content' of any work *can* be 'conceived of outside its embodiment in art. . . . One and the same theme, one and the same complex of ideas, one and the same attitude can underlie both the work of art and the scientific treatise'.[44] To this day, no grand system of Marxist criticism has been developed to the point where both generalities and particulars are adequately accounted for; the lure of the one has been as powerful as the fear of the other.

THE problem of the general and the particular also shaped the Soviet view of man, both inside and outside literature. To what extent is man a law unto himself, and to what extent is he a part of something larger? Is it possible, by knowing any given individual, to

[41] The first quotation in the paragraph is from 'K voprosu o postroyenii poetiki', *Iskusstvo*, I, p. 90, as cited by Lelevich, ibid. p. 88. The second and third quotations are from 'Metodologicheskiye zadachi . . .', pp. 101–102.

[42] Grossman-Roshchin, op. cit. p. 84.

[43] N. Fatov, 'Po povodu stati P. N. Sakulina ob istoriko-literaturnoi metodologii', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 5–6 (July–Sept. 1925), pp. 96–97.

[44] Op. cit. p. 88.

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understand human existence in its totality? Or is it necessary first to know the laws that govern mankind, and then take individuals as illustrations or applications of those general laws?

The Russian version of this problem has tended to emphasize the second view; and Bakunin's formulation of it has been paradigmatic. 'Individuality (*individualnost*)', he writes, 'must pass away, must disappear, in order to become personality (*lichnost*)'; and the movement from one to the other, from the particular to the general, is accomplished through 'the deed' (*delo*).[45] Real life, that is to say, can be found only when the individual dies to a sense of his separate selfhood. The most famous literary exponents of this idea have been Tolstoy and Pasternak[46]; but it is deep-rooted in the Russian mind, and has passed intact into the Soviet period. Of course, it is natural to any philosophy, such as Marxism, which believes that being determines consciousness, and describes itself as monistic; and Soviet Marxists, by and large, made it the model for the 'new man' who was supposed to develop in the 'new society'. There would be no hidden ideas, no ambiguities, nothing random or accidental, nothing private or unique, no abstract thought, no impotent will, no gratuitious emotion; 'integralness' (*tselostnost*) would identify the new man: a harmonious fusion of will, intellect, and emotion which, through action, would meld with the prevailing current of history.

All men were at bottom equal; proletarian man had gone far towards meeting the specifications of the model. But could *any* man properly be the subject of a work of literature? Admirable though the common man was, was he the stuff out of which great art could be made? Was it even proper, in an egalitarian age, to admit 'heroes' to literature? Or must new forms be devised which would give voice to the long-neglected 'masses'?

Such questions arose virtually from the moment the Civil War ended and people began to contemplate the creation of a new culture. Discussion was enthusiastic and frequently acrimonious. One representative sample of it can been seen in an exchange of views between Anatoly Lunacharsky and Pavel Kerzhentsev, in the journal *Press and Revolution*. Lunacharsky made a strong plea for the presence of highly visible individual hero-figures in the historical drama. For a true hero is a revolutionary, being a representative of the masses (which Lunacharsky distinguishes from the mere 'crowd' [*tolpa*], the criterion being 'awareness' [*soznaniye*]). Indeed, he insists, when the masses have reached a certain level, the hero inevitably appears as a condensed expression of their 'conscience'. This has been true throughout history,

[45] A discussion of *individualnost* and *lichnost* can be found in Bakunin's letter to his sisters, 3 January 1842, in *Sobraniye sochinenii i pisem*, ed. Ju. M. Steklov, III (Moscow, 1935), p. 90. A discussion of *delo* can be seen in his letter to his sister Tatiana, end of summer 1842, ibid. pp. 111–12.

[46] Cf. 'The Death of Ivan Ilich'; Pasternak's 'Letters from Tula' (*Pisma iz Tuly*), whose 'hero' is Tolstoy.

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although in the past such heroes have invariably been tragic because they have been in advance of the masses and thus separated from them by a 'deep gulf' (a 'successful' hero is an impossibility, as far as Lunacharsky is concerned, Oliver Cromwell being the example he cites). It is therefore unnecessary, as well as awkward, to try to present great numbers of people on the stage; a few representative figures will do.[47]

Kerzhentsev, writing a few months later, took strong exception. It is not a rule, he argued, that the individual hero concentrates the experience of the masses. For instance, Lunacharsky, in his own play *Oliver Cromwell,* shows only one side of the picture—the 'tragedy of the victorious petty bourgeoisie', but not the 'tragedy of the oppressed mass, which was vanquished and had no genuine and visible leader'. The dramatist must also concern himself with 'those persons unknown to history, the Johns, Jeans and Ivans, who were the flesh and blood of the oppressed mass'. The individual is merely 'part of a great whole', a manifestation of which can be seen in 'the tragedy of the English working class, which in a period of world revolution has no worthy leader; the tragedy of the German proletariat, which at the moment of sharpest conflict loses Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the tragedy of the oppressed classes of all ages, who undertake a struggle for their liberties, only dimly perceiving the goal before them and groping for the necessary methods'.[48]

Although Lunacharsky and Kerzhentsev were speaking specifically of figures in past history or in non-Soviet environments, their views are a convenient summary of the problem of the individual hero as it was being discussed in the 1920s. And despite considerable feeling in favour of the idea that the masses were the real heroes of history, the consensus was that literature, whatever the form, required a highly visible central character as the focus and vehicle of thought and action.

This seems rather strange in an age when the virtues of simplicity, modesty, and collectivity were being extolled. Perhaps it is a corollary of the idea that reality is a living organism. Man is, as it were, the most graphic representation of organic life, and a clear assurance that the world of fragments is unreal in any vital sense. And, just as reality, being organic, is purposeful, so must man, its highest visible representative, act in a purposeful manner. As one critic put it: plot is needed in literature because it is 'connected with character, with man'[49]—and both are expressions of the movement of organic reality.

[47] 'Mysli o kommunisticheskoi dramaturgii', *Pechat i Revolyutsia,* No. 2 (1921) pp. 31–36.

[48] 'O kommunisticheskoi dramaturgii', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya,* No. 6 (July–Aug. 1922), pp. 18–26. The last quotation is on p. 23.

[49] K. Loks, 'Sovremennaya proza', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya,* No. 5 (Aug.–Sept. 1923), p. 84.

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ONE of the first literary versions of the problem of heroism came with Dmitry Furmanov's *Chapaev* (1922). The hero, Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev, had actually existed: he was an illiterate peasant who was drafted into the tsarist army in World War I, learned to read, and, after the revolution, joined the Reds and swiftly rose to become commander of the 25th Division, where he was finally killed in battle. As we first see him in Furmanov's book, he has become a living legend to his men, a kind of folk hero: he is a fierce fighter, quick to show anger and quick to forgive, contemptuous of book learning, a superb natural strategist, and immune to the perils that beset ordinary mortals. Against him is set the real Chapaev, as seen through the eyes of Klychkov, a young political commissar: physically unimpressive, cautious, noisy, vain, and ignorant of ideology. In fact, the novel is built upon two different concepts of heroism: the strong individual who dominates events and shapes them to his will (the legend), as against the representative of the unconscious will of the masses (the reality). And it is clear that the second is the real one:

> his qualities were the most ordinary, the most human. . . . Chapaev's glory (*slava*) was engendered not so much by his heroic deeds as by the very people around him. This in no way belittles the colossal role played by Chapaev himself as a personality (*lichnost*) in the Civil War; but it must be realized and understood that around the name of each of the heroes there was more that was legendary than historically real. (Ch. XI).

Chapaev—rather than any other man—became 'heroic' because

> he embodied in himself, more fully than did the others, the raw and heroic mass of 'his own' fighters. . . . Many were braver and more intelligent than he was, and more talented in the matter of leading troops, more politically aware, but the names of these 'men' have been forgotten, while Chapaev lives and will long go on living in popular fame, for he was a native son of this milieu and, moreover, he combined in himself, in an astonishing way, things that were scattered among other individuals, among other characters, who were brothers-in-arms of his (Ch. XI).

It is worth noting that Chapaev is a kind of specialist. His natural abilities extend only to the military life. Klychkov, although by profession a weaver, is something of a generalist. He too undergoes change and development, learns to adjust himself to the regimen of war and to manipulate Chapaev as he has hoped; but his basic convictions remain steady, and since he is aware of the general direction of history, he can presumably operate anywhere.

The problem of heroism—and the attendant matter of specialist and generalist—lay at the heart of another famous work of the 1920s, Isaak Babel's *Red Cavalry* (*Konarmiya*).[50] Lyutov, the narrator-figure who is

[50] Actually, the stories were not brought together in book form until 1926, but they began to appear individually in various journals in 1923.

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present in virtually all the stories that make up the book, is, like Klychkov, a political commissar, who is posted to duty in a Cossack division during the Soviet-Polish conflict of 1920. As a Bolshevik, he believes that he kens the direction in which the current of events is moving; but he soon discovers that his ideological certainties and his private problems are irrelevant to every situation in which he is placed. There is simply no room for his kind of 'heroism': he is scorned, abused, mocked, and patronized by men who are utterly ignorant of the political realities he knows so well, and utterly indifferent to his wracking quest for self-definition. His greatest desire is to win acceptance by the Cossacks. But the price is fearsome: the sacrifice of dignity ('My First Goose', which parodies the individual heroic deed), the transgression of moral laws ('Dolgushov's Death')—and, ultimately, the extinction of the self as a person: he wishes to learn to ride in such a way as to pass completely unnoticed. But wherein does this cherished personhood or 'individuality' lie? It is marked out by a number of specialized roles—Jew, Bolshevik, intellectual—but not one of them speaks to the specifics of time and situation, and Lyutov is unable to bring them all together into a system of behaviour that will operate at his behest whenever he chooses. Each new circumstance requires a new kind of conduct, which cannot be foreseen and therefore cannot be rehearsed.

Lyutov, in effect, is a parody of the 'generalist' type as exemplified by Klychkov. He represents that familiar denizen of twentieth-century fiction, the outsider. This makes him (despite the exotic trappings of the book) among the most accessible to non-Russian readers of the now-famous heroes of the 1920s. His type was widespread in the literature of the time; indeed, it is characteristic, not exceptional. We see it embodied as the failure (Kavalerov, in Olesha's *Envy*), the outlaw (Vekshin, in Leonov's *The Thief*), the criminal (Filipp and Ivan, in Katayev's *The Embezzlers*), and many others.

Such characters, to pick up Bakunin's words, are unable to move from 'individuality' (*individualnost*) to 'personality' (*lichnost*) through 'deed' (*delo*). They are identified particularly with the writings of the Fellow Travellers. But they abound in the proletarian literature of the time as well. Although not so complex there, they can be just as twisted, unfulfilled and incompetent to cope with hostile surroundings. Yury Libedinsky's novella *A Week* (*Nedelya*), which was published in 1922, offers a good example.

The story-line is the essence of simplicity. The Bolsheviks are attempting to establish their rule in a village in the Urals region late in 1920 or early in 1921. They face the sullen resistance of most of the local citizenry, and outright armed rebellion by the peasants; finally they crush the opposition and again assert their authority. Each of these Bolsheviks represents a strongly defined 'type' which was to become a fixture in subsequent proletarian literature. For instance, Martynov, assistant chief of the Political Department, has joined the

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Party out of a romantic yen for action rather than from deep ideological conviction, and he cannot eradicate his prosperous bourgeois past; Klimin, head of the Cheka, is a narrow-minded bureaucrat who is insensitive to the larger political and social dimensions of life in the town; Robeyko, an old revolutionary, makes inspiring speeches to his younger comrades, but is a sad and sickly figure who has never known anything resembling a personal life. Each of the characters is flawed in a fundamental way; and each of them perishes. But what dooms them is not so much their defects as their inflexibility: each is a specialist locked into a role out of which he cannot step to meet changing conditions. None is capable of perceiving the growing menace of the restive peasants. None, that is, except Gornykh, a subordinate of Klimin's in the Cheka. He is an inarticulate young man, who operates by gropings and intuitions. His warnings about the revolt are ridiculed, but he has fathomed the mood of the masses, and when they do rise up, he rallies his men and holds out until reinforcements arrive. In other terms, Gornykh is a generalist. Libedinsky, however, cannot sustain him: after the uprising is put down, Gornykh takes over as head of the Cheka, suddenly turns eloquent, and brings the book to an end with a stirring specimen of oratory.

The typical hero of the literature of the 1920s, with few exceptions, is a flawed and fragmented character, who is incapable of defining himself as an individual or as a social being. In his more exaggerated manifestations, he is utterly depersonalized, no better than (indeed, often indistinguishable from) an object. This had been fashionable since at least Andrei Bely's time; the opening pages of *Petersburg* offer one illustration:

> Noses streamed by in profusion: aquiline, duckbill, roosterish, greenish, white; and streaming by here too was the absence of any nose. Streaming here were ones, twos, threes—fours; and bowler after bowler; bowlers, feathers, caps; caps, caps, feathers; tricorner, top hat, cap; shawl, umbrella, feather.[51]

This synecdochic technique was picked up in Soviet times by Boris Pilnyak and many others, and was lodged securely in the arsenal of literary devices of the 1920s. Bely got it from Gogol, of course. And, interestingly enough, Gogol associated it with evil: fragmentation is the outward sign of a world that has died, decomposed, and disintegrated; and Gogol's heroes are themselves mere fragments who try to pass themselves off as living men.[52] Most Soviet Marxists felt also that a fragmented world was an evil world, as we have seen, and they opened a campaign against the writers of the 1920s who cultivated it. Synecdoche they considered an unacceptable way of presenting the

[51] *Petersburg* (Petrograd, 1916), Ch. I.

[52] In a famous essay, 'Gogol and the Devil' (*Gogol i chert* (1906)), D. S. Merezhkovsky tries to make this kind of pretence a symptom of the demonic, and holds up Chichikov and Khlestakov as its chief representatives in Gogol's *oeuvre*.

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human personality. The grotesque (which singles out and exaggerates one feature of physique or character) was not tolerated. They disapproved of the allegorical representation of man—'good', 'evil', 'a soldier', 'a worker'—to which proletarian writers in particular were addicted; for this represented classification, and thus delimitation and particularization. The literary character, as a mimesis of 'real' man, was supposed to show 'perspective', a 'balance of parts'—in short, be a 'living man' who would display the full range of human emotions, a well-integrated personality, and a purposeful sense of life, and thus stand as a worthy representative of the new age.[53] It was expected that he would combine general and particular qualities in such a way as to make him effective as a social activist, and give him identity as an individual. Critics granted that for the time being, writers would probably have to show man 'with all his almost agonizing disharmonies and contradictions, doubts and dislocations', but he was to be a man in movement, a man 'overcoming the old Adam'.[54]

In point of fact, the larger assumptions about the nature and purpose of man worked against the ideal of a balance of general and particular. It had always been the generalist, in the literature of the 1920s, who had succeeded in coping with life; and this sort of character answered very well to the model of man which most Marxist critics—whatever their other differences—had constructed. Even a critic like Alexander Voronsky, who insisted on psychological complexity in characterization, wrote of the 'new man':

> He is always a warrior, always on watch. He is never demobilized, he never rests long or easily. He is always in the masses, with the masses. He is with them in the trenches, in the dugouts. He must develop in himself a scorn for death. His intimate, personal life should be so merged with the social that it is no hindrance at all in the camp life he must lead.[55]

IT was not until 1927 that a work appeared which seemed to offer both artistic quality along with a paradigm of the sort of hero that critics had been demanding. This was Alexander Fadeyev's *The Rout* (*Razgrom*). The 'hero' of this book is a military unit operating in the Far East about 1919. Fadeyev abstracts this collective hero from time (we are not exactly sure when the events take place) and space (we never know exactly where the unit is). In other words, he suppresses anything that would localize or specify the setting. Each member of

[53] A. Lezhnev, 'Literaturnye zametki', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Oct.–Nov. 1925), p. 136. 'Living man' was a catch phrase of L. Averbakh and his group gathered around the journal *On Literary Guard* (*Na literaturnom postu*). For an interesting discussion of this question, cf. Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature* (New York, 1953), pp. 77–82.

[54] The first quotation is from A. Voronsky, 'Pisatel, kniga, chitatel', *Krasnaya nov*, No. 1 (1927), p. 231; the second is from A. Lezhnev, 'O gruppe proletarskikh pisatelei "Pereval"', *Krasnaya nov*, No. 3 (1925), p. 262.

[55] 'Polemicheskiye zametki', *Krasnaya nov*, No. 3 (1924), p. 230.

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this unit (with one exception) is presumably a sincere, albeit inarticulate supporter of the Soviet course. But the unit is not really a collective: it lacks personality (*lichnost*), we might say. Rather, it is a conglomerate of many individuals, each defined by his class origins, his memories of the past, and his private dreams. Levinson, the commander, is the least specified of them all: he comes from a rootless social group (the Jews), and has pitilessly banished from his mind most of the remnants of his past life. Yet he stands apart from his men, who are awed by his silences which they mistake for profundities. The point of Levinson's leadership, throughout the book, is, paradoxically, to *avoid* action, to keep his unit on the move so that there will be no direct contact with the enemy. But at last they must fight: this is the deed (*delo*) which effectuates the transition from individuality to personality. For some, death is the crucial event:

> He [Morozka] was not sorry that he was going to die in a minute, that is, cease to feel, suffer, and move—he could not even imagine himself in such an unusual and strange situation, because at this moment he was still living, suffering, and moving—but he understood clearly that he would never see the sun-drenched village [his private vision] and these near and dear people [his comrades] who were riding behind him. But he felt them vividly in himself—these tired people who suspected nothing and had entrusted themselves to him—and he thought of no other possibility for himself than the possibility of having time to warn them about the danger.[56]

Presumably we are to take Morozka's experience as emblematic for all those who die in this book. The illuminating power of death was discussed by Bakunin, and it has, of course, been explored by many writers, notably Tolstoy. Levinson does not die, but his experience is similar—indeed, it is a kind of symbolic death. As the prospect of an encounter with the enemy dawns on him, he feels fearful and helpless: 'He understood how mortally tired he was, and how powerless he now was to do anything for these people who were despondently plodding along behind him'. Then shots are heard, and: 'He looked around helplessly, at first seeking support from the others, but in that single, terrible, mutely pleading face into which the pale and strained faces of the partisans had melted, he read the same sole expression of helplessness and fear. . . . "Here it is—here's what I was afraid of", he thought. . . .' But then he sees one of his men who 'was looking intently in the direction from which the shots had come', and is struck by his 'ingenuous face with its high cheekbones, leaning slightly forward, awaiting an order, glowing with that genuine and greatest of passions, in whose name the best men in this unit had died', and the transformation occurs: 'Levinson shuddered and straightened up, and something painful and sweet began to hum within him. Suddenly he drew out his sword,

[56] *Razgrom*, Ch. XVII. Cf. Bakunin for an interesting discussion of death and the loss of individualism: letter to his sisters, 3 January 1842, op. cit. p. 90.

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and he too leaned forward with glittering eyes.'[57] The 19 men who remain after this battle are as one: the deed (*delo*) has done its work: 'personality' (*lichnost*) has been achieved.

The Rout received favourable reviews from all sides: it was considered a model of the kind of action that most Marxist critics hoped to find in the literature of the 1920s, and, in their enthusiasm for its 'Tolstoyan' devices, they thought they perceived real depth and substance in the characters as well. But such works were rare. And the attempts which some of the Fellow Travellers made to adjust their tormented and isolated heroes to Soviet society rang false, by and large. In the last story of *Red Cavalry* ('*Argamak*'), for instance, Lyutov states: 'Months went by. My dream came true. The Cossacks stopped following me and my horse with their eyes.' And Leonov finished off *The Thief* as follows: 'The rest—how Mitka found himself with the wood cutters and was first beaten and then treated with kindness; how he worked in their guild and ate himself silly on the food he earned with the heavy labour of hewing railroad ties; how he toughened up, went to work in a factory, studied . . . how he regained the name he had lost—all that is outside the scope of this story' (Part 4, Chapter XVIII). But in the terms of the book as a whole, Lyutov can never adjust: to make him unobtrusive is to flatten out, with one stroke of the pen, all the contradictions of his personality without hinting at any spiritual crisis of a magnitude sufficient to bring this about. Mitka does undergo a wracking crisis, but his growth into a new life is dismissed in a couple of short paragraphs. Such passages are obviously meant to bring troublesome books to some sort of conclusion. For one famous hero of 'Fellow Traveller' fiction—Kavalerov, in Yury Olesha's *Envy*, the process of transition from 'individuality' to 'personality' is amply documented (it is really the theme of the book); but it is accomplished by sinking Kavalerov into a Freudian world of Oedipal fantasy, which no Marxist could, of course, countenance.

A CONVENIENT summary of attitudes toward the hero shortly after the mid-point of the decade can be seen in a lengthy appreciation of Fedor Gladkov's novel *Cement*, written by A. Lezhnev in 1925.[58] Gladkov was a 'proletarian' writer; Lezhnev (a prominent critic) was generally far more sympathetic to Fellow Travellers. But he greeted this new work with enthusiasm. For one thing, it illustrated many of the features that Marxist critics had been seeking in the literature of their time:

> . . . this is a work in a large style, which sweeps away the tradition of small literature, superficially ethnographic and drab. . . . Large problems are posed in high relief. . . . There has been a transition from pieces and fragments, from small scenes and pictures, from

[57] Ibid.
[58] 'Literaturnye zametki', *Pechat i Revolyutsiya*, No. 7 (Oct.–Nov. 1925); page references in text.

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> photography and oral narration (*skaz*), to a synthetic and generalizing art. In Gladkov's *Cement* there is the same powerful and strong breath of big-scale art, satuated with social content, that we feel in the Russian classics (p. 133).

But he then goes on to register a complaint about the way in which Gladkov conceives of character:

> Before us we see not a 'specialist' (*spets*) but the 'idea' of a specialist, the 'idea' of a communist intellectual, a trouble-maker *per se*, a mother *per se*. Individuality has vanished here; generality has remained. Dasha [the heroine] is energetic, independent, direct, decisive—but these are external characteristics, peculiar to an entire category of people, to the iron cohort of the revolution. We know nothing about her individual qualities, about the particular form into which her decisiveness, directness and energy are poured (p. 134).

What Dasha lacks, in short, is a 'birthmark', a significant detail that will identify her as an individual (p. 134).

Lezhnev here points at the problem that was to become crucial for the Soviet writer: how can literary characters exemplify 'positive' qualities which are common to all men, yet establish an identity which makes each of them immediately recognizable as an individual? One solution can be seen in an episode of Gladkov's novel that is built around the heroine, Dasha, and the communist, Badin. At one point, he attempts to rape her; she is saved when 'bandits' attack, but then proceeds to turn against the new menace so that Badin can escape. To Lezhnev's annoyance, Gladkov had succumbed to the urge for a quick effect. Nothing in Badin's character justifies this access of animal passion: it is introduced mainly 'so that the abrupt change, to very great self-possession and heroism, can be shown with the greatest vividness possible . . . how the personal element is instantaneously forced out by the general' (p. 135). There is no question of psychological consistency here; character serves as the vehicle of an idea; it changes according to the requirements of the situation; it is, in short, completely functional. Many works of Old Russian literature take just such a view of character. In the *Primary Chronicle*, for example, Olga, while still a pagan, exemplifies all the defects of paganhood (pettiness, spitefulness, cruelty, deceitfulness); but the moment she converts to Christianity, every trace of her old self vanishes, and she becomes a model of piety, even saintliness.[59]

As Lezhnev's remarks suggest, however, Marxist critics disapproved of this conception of character. 'How', he asks, 'can the reader regard Badin as a staunch, exemplary communist, when before our very eyes he rapes Mekhova, tries to rape Dasha, arranges secret drinking-bouts. . . .' (p. 136). Character, especially that of the generalist, was expected

[59] For an interesting discussion of the concept of personality in old Russian literature, cf. D. S. Likhachev, *Chelovek v literature drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1970), 2nd ed.

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to be consistent and steady; after all, the truths it exemplified did not change. Indeed, there seems to be a tendency, among Marxist critics, to make sudden changes in personality synonymous with deviousness, and to attribute them to 'negative' characters.[60] Some writers, especially in the thirties and forties, were quite ready to sacrifice psychological verisimilitude (not to speak of common sense) to the idea of consistency.

A more common practice was to create an environment which did not offend the hero's proclivities toward the general. One ready example is the profusion—especially in the literature of the 1930s and 1940s—of scenes depicting Party meetings, which of course address themselves more to the larger truths of communism than to specific problems. A more interesting and far more significant solution lay in the creation of a hierarchy of characters, with generalists at the top, and a well-defined order of specialists below them. This trend is adumbrated in one of the most famous 'industrial' novels that appeared in response to the first five-year plan: Valentin Katayev's *Time, Forward!* (*Vremya, vperyod!* (1932)). Here the generalist-hero is Margulies, who has been entrusted with organizing a cement-pouring contest. He is a good representative of the New Man: in him will, feeling and thought are united through action. One of his antagonists is Nalbandov, who opposes the contest as a 'stunt', objecting that it will upset the ever-precarious balance of supply and demand in the cement industry as a whole. To back his argument, he marshals an impressive array of facts and figures, which reveal that he is familiar with the problem locally and nationally. Margulies has no such data at hand; his scheme, on the face of it, is foolhardy; yet he presses on and brings off his 'stunt' successfully. Victory is won not only because Margulies scorns the specialist, but also because he follows a larger vision. This requires him to remain aloof from facts and figures, from the pedantic progress of ordinary time (he does not even own a watch), and from physical activity: at one point, the contest seems about to fail for lack of a pair of hands to push a wheelbarrow, but it never occurs to Margulies (or to anyone else) that *he* might pitch in and lend his muscle. No, he is a generalist, who confronts specific situations by employing specialists with clearly defined skills. And because they are specialists, they are narrow, and are therefore inferior in every essential way to the generalist. Often they are highly particularized as to physical traits too: they are the ones with the 'birthmarks'—usually a single striking mark of physique or speech (such as dialect). In Part 2 of Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podnyataya tselina*, 1960), for example, Grandad Shchukar is a 'specialist' of this kind: a buffoonish spinner of yarns in thick regional speech, and the butt of the kind of bathroom humour which finds him in a clump of weeds sitting out the consequences of over-indulgence in watermelons.

[60] This, in fact, is a prominent theme in Russian literature generally, and deserves special investigation.

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This sort of joke could not be made at the expense of the generalist-hero: it is far too specific, and far too 'low'. Indeed, it is difficult to form a mental picture of what most generalist-heroes actually look like. Scant attention is paid to their physical exteriors; most often authors try to suggest some inner feature. The hero may be constantly in motion, or possess flashing eyes, or have a resolute manner. Since the standards for such heroes are set by truths external to any given book, generalist characters are virtually indistinguishable from one another. Yet specific functions do have to be performed in works of literature, for the sake of advancing the plot, or providing contrasts in tone, or creating a certain specific gravity. In the literature from the 1930s to the 1950s, such functions are almost invariably assigned to 'lower' characters. But because these functions are carefully delimited, the specifics which attend them do not threaten the integrity of the generalist characters; yet at the same time, such specifics are accorded a certain recognition or rationality. This is all very reminiscent of the practices of classical tragedy; and it is interesting to note that Lezhnev, in his review of *Cement*, makes an off-hand but unwittingly prophetic remark to the effect that Dasha 'has no birthmark and cannot be conceived of as having one, just as Medea or Antigone have none and cannot be conceived of as having one' (p. 136).

Lezhnev's article of 1926 foresaw the directions in which Soviet literature was to develop in its struggle with the problem of the general and the particular. Lezhnev calls for a blend of the two—'qualities' combined in 'forms'—but he clearly opts for generalities and for the sort of style and genre that presumably could best accommodate them. While regretting the absence of 'birthmarks', he goes on to observe: 'It is precisely his [Gladkov's] abstractness, his disregard for small details, his attempt to capture only the general . . . which have helped him avoid being dragged down into small literature, and instead have helped him emerge into the open air of big literature. His defects as a writer have been his merits as a path-breaker' (p. 134).

THE division of labour in *Time, Forward!*, then, not only reflects a reality of modern industrial society, but also establishes the structure that was to become characteristic of the Soviet novel in the two decades following the 1920s. This was a highly organized and highly stratified fictional world, with 'generalists' on top and sundry 'specialists' arrayed below them. And this same stratification was reflected in genre and style as well. As we have suggested, Lezhnev's emphasis on the 'monumental' qualities of *Cement* answered to a general tendency to favour the novel-form. By the 1930s, the expression of desire had hardened into an assertion of fact: for nearly two decades, the novel stood as the characteristic genre of Soviet literature. At the same time, its language continued to move towards greater generality and abstraction. The colourful, detailed, richly ornamented language that marked prose-fiction in the earlier period gradually faded. Hints of

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this development can be seen, however, even in the fiction of the 1920s, particularly in the work of the 'proletarian' writers. Gladkov's *Cement*, for one, contains a number of passages like the following:

> Every day Gleb dropped by the machine-room and here he immediately became another man. The still, thick blue light, the gleaming cleanliness of the glass, the tile and the blue lustre of the diesels in silver and gold. And the tender singing reverberation of the levers, hammers and vials. This austere and youthful music of metal, and the even, calm shine, bathed in the warm odour of grease and oil, was softly and powerfully soothing to the soul. It was as if these tender reverberations knocked and sang in the heart as well. And everything that remained outside these walls was unimportant and insignificant, like rubbish which ought to be carted away. And what was most important, and full of enormous meaning, was only here, in this gleaming blue reverberation, in the sighing of the black altars which had been firmly set in their compact mountings. From behind the brass safety-rail he would gaze long at the gigantic fly-wheels, light in flight, at the broad red pulleys which flowed along on wings and trembled behind the fly-wheels. And here, by the fly-wheels, elusive in their movement, he felt a sense of alarm at their muteness; only moist hot waves flooded over his face, his hands, his chest, and shook Gleb with their deep-throated breathing. Fascinated, he would lose consciousness, he would dissolve in this feathery iron flight, in the hot waves of air, and he would stand without time, without thoughts, without support, without distances (Ch. XVI).

The hieratic tone is characteristic of the writings of the so-called 'Smithy group', those romanticists of industry to whom Gladkov belonged. But the passage takes on its sense of generality from the vocabulary as well. It is larded with abstract words—'cleanliness', 'unimportant', 'insignificant', 'illusive'. Many of the adjective-substantive combinations are virtually formulaic: 'still light', 'warm odour', 'gigantic fly-wheels', 'broad pulleys'; even those which at first glance might seem original were firmly embedded in the Smithy's lexicon of clichés by 1925: 'tender singing reverberation', 'austere and youthful music'; and at least two figures of speech ('black altars', 'flowed along on wings') are built on sudden shifts into abstraction.

The Rout, another 'proletarian' novel, offers examples which are different in kind but similar in intent. Though the entire book unfolds in nature's realm, Fadeyev makes only perfunctory, almost grudging mention of it: 'The road ran toward them like an endless elastic ribbon' (Ch. VIII); 'The forest opened out before them unexpectedly—in an expanse of lofty blue sky and bright rust-coloured field, sun-drenched and mown, spreading out right and left as far as the eye could see' (Ch. XVII). Fadeyev is obviously determined to keep his topography as vague as possible, so that neither his characters nor his readers will have any familiar and reassuring points of physical reference to grasp.

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A work of somewhat later vintage, Katayev's *Time, Forward!* actually employs a gradual change of style to emphasize the theme. At the beginning, we find ourselves on territory made familiar by numerous earlier writers:

> The alarm-clock rattled like a tin full of lozenges. The alarm-clock was cheap, painted, brown, of Soviet manufacture. . . .
>
> The air broke softly, like a slate board. . . .
>
> Four winds—the west, the south, the east, and the north—were coming together outside in order to battle together against man.
>
> They raised enormous dust storms.
>
> Slanting towers of dust whirled about, covering the sun. They were thick and rust-coloured, as if they had been felted from camel's hair. The soot of eclipse covered the earth. The whirlwind knocked automobiles and trains together, tore down tents, blinded, burned and shook scaffolding and steel constructions.
>
> The winds raged.
>
> At the same time, their younger brothers, the household draughts, were raising minor mischief inside the hotel. They blew the curtains out of the rooms, tore hooks, still embedded in wood, off the balconies, broke panes of glass, and flung shaving gear off the window sills (Ch. 2).

The density and vividness of this style not only retards but virtually arrests time, and is therefore appropriate to the opening of a novel which tells of the acceleration of time. And, as this theme begins to unfold, the style undergoes change: detail is dropped, the lexicon ascends to abstractness, the syntax flows along ever more smoothly, and finally, toward the end of the novel, we are reading passages like the following:

> The construction-area extended to the very horizon, illuminated in all its details by the rosy-grey skeletal light of the early dawn.
>
> It was ominously unpeopled and lifeless.
>
> The useless lights of the lanterns and searchlights, devoid of power, brightness and sense, burned feebly and weakly, scattered over all the earth, as far as the eye could see (Ch. 67).

Abstraction—' power ', ' brightness ', ' lifelessness '—abounds here; and the word ' details ' now does service for the sort of enumeration that Katayev made at the beginning. Even the lists of substantives are deceptive:

> Clouds, elevators, fences, Mordovian sarafans, water pumps, caterpillar tractors, churches, minarets, collective farms, village Soviets.
>
> And everywhere, no matter where you looked—from right to left and from left to right, from west to east and from east to west, the transmission towers of high-tension wires strode on diagonals in open formation.
>
> Six-armed and four-legged, they strode enormously, like Martians, casting latticed shadows onto forests and mountains, onto groves and rivers, onto the straw roofs of villages. . . . (Ch. 68).

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What at first glance appears to be specification is actually not: the substantives are all plurals, and are meant to suggest classes of things; the listing is random, lacks focus, and thus cannot be localized; the topography of the second paragraph is intended to create an impression of vast space, and does not allow the eye to rest upon anything particular; and even the simile in paragraph three is hackneyed and depends on an appeal to something no man has ever seen. There is a refusal of the concrete and of the visual.

Time, Forward!, then, uses style to work out its theme. In the ever more rarefied atmosphere of the book, any subsidence into particulars immediately strikes the eye. There is at least one such instance: the description of an advertisement for a refrigerator, which Mr. Bixby, an American engineer working for the Soviets, has found in a glossy magazine and loves to study as he dreams of the opulent life:

> There stood a small elegant cupboard on porcelain legs. The cupboard was open. And inside it, in strict order, food was spread out on the shelves.
>
> Rosy ham, firm and curly vegetables, a loaf of bread, canned goods, lard, cream, pickles, eggs, a chicken, jam; and all this of an ideal freshness and in the most delicate natural colours.
>
> And, leaning toward the cupboard, there stood a woman depicted in several colours. Young, rosy, blue-eyed, copper-haired, dear, gay Maggie. She was smiling joyously. Her little cherry-red mouth was open, like a case containing a tiny pearl necklace (Ch. 57).

The passage is all the more arresting because in content, as in the wealth of specifics, it stands in sharp contrast to the sweaty, dusty environment in which Mr. Bixby finds himself. And it is also significant because it is associated with a 'negative' ideology (acquisitiveness) and a 'negative' character. Here he is a foreigner; but he need not be. The same association can be found in many a work of the 1930s and 1940s with all-Soviet casts. Indeed, a thickening of style is often enough to point to the presence of evil even before the author spells it out. In Part 2 of Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned*, for example, the hero, Davydov, steps into the office of Polyanitsa, a collective-farm chairman about whom we know nothing as yet:

> To Davydov's eyes, the office of the collective-farm chairman had a strange appearance: the spacious room was lavishly decorated with dusty flowers in ochre-coloured tubs and clay pots; ancient Viennese chairs, alternating with dirty stools, nestled orphan-like among them; standing at the doorway was a tattered couch of fantastic shape, with rusty springs sticking from it; pasted on the walls were pictures from *The Grainfield* [a popular magazine] and cheap lithographs, depicting Russia's conversion to Christianity in Kiev, the siege of Sevastopol, the battle of Shipka, and the Japanese infantry going on the offensive near Lao-Yan during the war of 1904.
>
> Hanging over the chairman's desk was a yellowed portrait of Stalin, and on the opposite wall there was a brightly-coloured, fly-blown picture advertising the Morozov cotton mill. In the picture

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> a dashing toreador in a raspberry-coloured jacket had wrapped a loop of thread around the horns of an enraged bull, and with one hand was restraining the rearing animal, while the other was casually resting upon his sword. Lying at the toreador's feet was a huge, half-unwound spool of white thread, and its label clearly read: 'No. 40' (Ch. 15).

It soon turns out that Davydov has good reason to regard the appearance of the room as 'strange': Polyanitsa, although a communist occupying a responsible position, is in reality a villain. To be sure, this is also suggested by the nature of objects which presumably have no place in the world of a self-respecting Bolshevik (especially a yellowed portrait of Stalin!); but it is significant that they are specified in detail such as can scarcely be found elsewhere in the book.

In Katayev, in Sholokhov, and in many other writers of the 1930s and 1940s, the Marxist distrust of specifics had become a literary fact. Revisions were even made in long since published works, in the interests of further despecification: for example, technical terms, jargon, slang, and dialect were weeded out.[61] A single level of style was developing—not only within individual works, but within the corpus of writing as a whole. Sudden shifts of tone or diction were used to signal ideological crises. To put the matter another way, style ceased to be a mark of genre. The varieties of fiction came more and more to resemble one another; length was the only essential mark of distinction. More important, the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction began to blur and all but disappeared. To some extent this happened because the definitions of generality were set in the political and sociological world; and fiction, as it continued to move toward this world, could and did adopt a ready-made language. Certainly the speeches of communist heroes in novels of the 1930s and 1940s resemble editorials in *Pravda*, both in substance and style; but it must be remembered that their language does not pull against the general texture of these novels, but rather weaves smoothly into it. Politics made its demands on writers, as we all know; but the fact is that once the world of generalities was entered (whether through ideology or through fiction), the inhabitants tended to speak the same language.

There is a further consideration. In the internationalist mood of the 1920s and early 1930s (when nationalism was frowned upon as being particularizing and fragmenting), and with the assurance that Moscow stood at the centre of a universal truth, there seemed to be a feeling that some new 'language' of communism had to be developed which would take Russian into account but not be reducible to it alone. One observes that the growing abstraction of style tended to favour words which describe universal phenomena of psychology ('love', 'hate') or of nature ('cold', 'hot', 'sunny') and have few specifically Russian connotations.

[61] Cf. Maurice Friedberg, 'New Editions of Soviet Belles Lettres: A Study in Politics and Palimpsests', *The American Slavic and East European Review*, XIII, No. 1 (Feb. 1954).

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So far this problem has not been studied, but it seems potentially fruitful for a better understanding of many of the developments we have been discussing here.

BY the mid-1930s, then, the problem of the general and the particular, which had so preoccupied Marxists from the very beginning of the Soviet regime, had worked itself out, not merely as a problem of theory, but in literary practice as well. Political developments had their effect, of course. But the arguments put forth by critics and writers in the name of 'literature' led in the same direction. The best writers of the 1920s eventually abandoned their obsession with particulars. But literature was not simply 'taken over' by politics; rather, literature and politics, sharing assumptions that were not always obvious, moved towards one another and met. A larger question, of course, is whether a literature which honours the premises of Marxist aesthetics must inevitably develop in this same direction. Or does a particular ethos produce certain kinds of literature, whatever the age or social condition, as suggested by the parallels between the *Primary Chronicle*, classical and neo-classical tragedy, and socialist realism? A thorough study of this problem should certainly take account of the striking reappearance of particulars in the fiction and poetry of the so-called 'Thaw' period of the last 15 years and the reassertion, by the 'official' aestheticians of Marxism, of the enduring validity of the general. But that is the subject of another essay.

Erratum: A typographical error distorted the meaning of a sentence in the article by Linda Lubrano Greenberg, 'Soviet Science Policy and the Scientific Establishment,' on page 62 of our previous issue (No. 81). It should read: 'Ideological controls are, by their nature, more pervasive [**not** "persuasive"] than the administrative controls discussed earlier.'

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About That, and About Some Other Things

E. J. Brown

Preparatory

MAYAKOVSKY'S poetic 'recapitulation' of his principal concerns and the leading motifs of his work have been pointed out in the case of the *Tragedy* and *Mystery-Bouffe*. The poem *About That* is another effort at summing up his past, but at the same time it points ahead to a future which the poet impatiently demands to see. The poem speaks of love, indeed the same old love for Lily Brik which inspired his earliest work. Just as in *The Cloud*, *The Backbone Flute*, and *Man*, love is defeated by the indestructible philistine who narrowly concentrates on personal and family happiness, and in this poem the suspicion grows that the enemy of *Man* and 'ruler of all', the arch-philistine, has a firm seat in the proletarian state and in the poet's own self. *About That* is a clear reminiscence of the earlier poem *Man*. The 'Mayakovsky' of that poem is directly recalled as 'the man from seven years ago' whose soul is 'held fast in the ice', and who stares downward at his own death from the bridge over the Neva. The 'ruler of all' is not present in *About That*, but the acquisitive egos that insult the poet are the servants of the 'ruler' in the new society. *About That* is a reminiscence of *Man*, but it purports to be an answer to *Man*, even a correction. The poems are a striking contrast in their endings: in both the poet takes leave of earth for the stars, but the ending of *Man* is disconsolate and hopeless: there is no refuge for the poet in a universe just as cold and hostile as the planet he's left behind. In *About That* his starry destination is the Great Bear—Big Dipper, a near relative of the poet himself, since the bear has served in the poem as his metaphor and symbol. The constellation, moreover, is both a dipper and an ark, a nice conceit suggested by the assonance that links the two words in Russian (*kovsheg—kovsh*), and as an ark it will carry the poet through night's flood to harbours of daylight and sunshine:

> Now! Now! Now!
> Out into space!
> Straight and sure!
> The sun gilds the mountains.
> Day smiles from the harbour.

The strong major note in these concluding lines is reached only after a tortured progress through the poet's tangled emotional life. Like *The Cloud*, this poem too explores the poet's love, his friends and enemies, the abhorrent 'fat ones' (*zhirnye*) in a new guise, his revolution in a new and 'higher' phase, and the cruel paradox of certain death in despite of an absolute demand for immortality.

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The poem *About That* may be broken down into three basic motifs: (1) tragic love, (2) the philistine, and (3) the future, and the three are mixed and mingled in many ways. Before analysing the poem itself it would be well to place it in the context of a number of shorter pieces that served as practice and preparation.

BETWEEN 1920 and 1922 Mayakovsy's talent was almost totally devoted to the production of agitational verses. Those verses, written during the years of hunger and civil war, reflect for the most part the bolshevik concerns of a particular moment, and Mayakovsky wrote them as an employee of the state. Even during this period, however, there are occasional glimpses of an authentic poet: the poem about the sun, for instance, was written in 1920, and some other poems of a lyrical or humorous cast were produced about the same time, and published in a collection of poetry and prose the title of which, *Liren* (1921), suggests that it was a partial outlet for dammed up lyrical energies. One of these, the title of which may be translated 'What to Say to a Girl' (*Otnoshenie k baryshne*) is slight and cute with some characteristic phrase play at the end:

This night decided it—
Shouldn't we be lovers?
It's dark—no one would see.
I bent over her, really,
And as I bent I,
Really,
Said like a good father:
'Passion's precipice is steep—
Be so good,
As to leave.
Leave—
And be so good.' [1]

'Heine-esque' (*Geineobraznoe*) and 'Grief' (*Gore*) also offer interesting though unremarkable word-play, and the latter, a brief choreography of playful rhymes,[2] strongly recalls some of Mayakovsky's early contributions to the futurist anthologies. 'A Cigar-Case into the Grass' (*Portsigar v travu*) [3] is a miniature confrontation of nature and technology, in which technology—the cigar-case—comes out far ahead.

The short piece entitled 'About Some Trash' [4] is the earliest and probably the most potent of Mayakovsky's attacks on the philistines now panoplied in the red flag of revolution. Mayakovsky's old enemy, the *meshchanin*, is shown weaving his parasitical existence among the bric-à-brac of communism. Cat-like, he purrs behind the back of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic:

[1] *PSS*, II, p. 39.
[2] *PSS*, II, pp. 40, 41.
[3] *PSS*, II, p. 42. This poem was not published until 1939.
[4] '*O dryani*' (1921), *PSS*, II, p. 73.

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From the wide expanse of the Russian soil,
From the day of the revolution's birth,
They come thronging in,
Easily changing their colour,
And settle down in all the offices.

The philistine is defined by his overweening interest in comfortable apartments, pianos and piano lessons, higher incomes, and showy uniforms (*tikhookeanskie galifishcha*). He has a picture of Marx on his wall—in a pink frame—and a canary-cage hanging from the ceiling. His comfortable cat is curled up sleeping on a copy of *Izvestia*. And this former hero turned solid citizen is a threat to the vitals of the revolution: Marx observes all this from his place of honour on the wall, and he fairly howls:

More frightening than Wrangel
Is the philistine's life style.

'About Some Trash' not only anticipates the warning against that life style contained in *About That*, but it is a kind of preliminary sketch for the picture of neo-bourgeois contentment worked out much later in *The Bedbug*, the main character of which is a 'former worker' and 'former hero' who has lived down both his calluses and his wounds. Finally, we must note as a matter of some interest that the poem 'About Some Trash' was published in the satirical periodical *Bov* on the same page as a eulogy of the heroes who had taken the Perekop peninsula in the Crimea from the White armies,[4a] and that the last lines of that eulogy 'Glory! Glory! Glory!' are picked up in the opening line of the poem 'About Some Trash':

Glory, Glory, Glory to the heroes!!!
Anyhow, they've had their full due.
Now let's talk
About trash.

Mayakovsky produced during 1921 and 1922 a cluster of short poems depicting scenes from contemporary Soviet life, with appropriate, sometimes biting commentary. To this brief series of poems, published in various places, he gave the general title 'Our Way of Life' (*Nash byt*). The series included 'A Muddled Scene' (*Nerazberikha*, 1921),[5] 'A Verse about Myasnitsky Street, About a Woman, and About the All-Russian Scale' (*Stikhotvorenie o Myasnitskoi, o babe, i o vserossiiskom masshtabe*, 1921),[6] and the poem which attracted Lenin's favourable attention, 'Lost in Conference' (*Prozasedavshiyesya*, 1922).[7] Some others not expressly included in the series do nonetheless fit into it (for instance

[4a] '*Poslednyaya stranichka grazhdanskoi voiny*', PSS, II, p. 71.
[5] *PSS*, II, p. 76.
[6] *PSS*, II, p. 83.
[7] *PSS*, IV, p. 7.

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Byurokratiada, 1922),[8] and 'Comrades, Let Me Share With You My Impressions Of Paris And Of Monet' (*Tovarishchi, razreshite mne podelitsia vpechatleniyami o Parizhe i o Monè*, 1923).[9]

The experience of Soviet life that gave form and content to the poem *About That* accumulates gradually in these brief vignettes. 'A Muddled Scene' is a poetic reflection of Moscow street life in 1921. The juxtaposition in it of violent contrasts gives a vivid impressionistic picture of the strange combinations produced by the revolution. The 'Verse about Myasnitsky Street . . . etc.' works out a contrast between the inflated cosmic rhetoric cultivated by the state and the miserable reality of everyday life.

'Lost in Conference', the poem which marked a change in Mayakovsky's relations with Lenin, neatly characterizes the Soviet bureaucracy, which already exhibited features that would sooner or later become firmly fixed: insistence on paper routines along with brutal indifference to people, ritualistic jargon, and constant, interminable meetings. The poem is a powerful expression of the ordinary citizen's exasperation at the pompous inaccessibility of those minor bureaucrats with whom he must deal. Lenin's comment, contained in a speech he delivered at a meeting of metalworkers, is forthright in its revelation of the reasons for his changed evaluation of Mayakovsky:

> Yesterday I happened to read in *Izvestia* a poem by Mayakovsky on a political theme. I don't consider myself an admirer of his talent, though I fully realize my lack of competence in the literary field. But it's a long time since I experienced such pleasure and satisfaction, from a political and administrative viewpoint. In his poem he utterly derides conferences and makes fun of the communists because they're always conferring and re-conferring. I don't know whether it's good poetry, but I guarantee you it's absolutely right from a political point of view.[10]

Byurokratiada, as the title suggests, is another attack on the impregnable paper fortress of officialdom, and it ends with a concrete proposal:

> I, as you know,
> Am not a responsible official.
> I'm a poet.
> I have no office talent.
> But I think we should
> Quite simply
> Grab the office by its chimney
> And shake it out.
> And then sit quietly
> Over those we've shaken out,

[8] *PSS*, IV, p. 20.
[9] *PSS*, IV, p. 56.
[10] V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniya*, 33, pp. 197–98.

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Pick out one and give him an order:
'Write!'
Only we'll ask him,
'For God's sake comrade,
Don't write much!'

'Comrades, Let Me Share With You My Impressions . . . etc.' expresses a poet's exasperation with the bureaucratic apparatus of the *Moscow Section for Popular Education* (*MONO*), for which he produced propaganda posters. The lengthy and complicated process of certification and approval of projects always repelled him, and it is difficult to say whether these poems reflect real inefficiencies in the bureaucracy or only the poet's impatience with any kind of organized procedure.

The resurgence of the philistine under the aegis of the hammer and sickle is a principal concern of the poem *About That*, and of two other long poems that he worked on during 1922 but never finished, *The Fourth International* and *The Fifth International*. *The Fourth International* is in the form of an open letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, whom it honours for their long and patient work 'in the underground', then for their resolution and courage in 'taking into their iron hands the fiery and fearful reins of the revolution'. While it offers praise to the makers of the revolution it raises in powerful images the spectre of the philistine who threatens the revolution and all its champions. The most telling and at the same time amusing image, one that delivers a sharp satirical thrust at Mayakovsky's literary enemies, the proletarian poets, is a picture of the 'proletcultist' of the future on a pleasant lawn in front of the building of the 'Soviet of Deputies', playing at croquet.[11] This poem contains one of Mayakovsky's earliest statements on the takeover of the symbols, the slogans, and the martyrology of the revolution by a new class intent on creating itself as an establishment. Mayakovsky appeals for a 'renewal of youth' and a new rebellion against the coming 'communist satiety'.[12] The titles and honours that the revolution bestows he will reject and instead retire to his 'attic' there to celebrate uprisings that are still to come. His function is to instal in the Marxist dialectic poetic motors of a hundred horsepower and to prepare for a 'third' revolution, the revolution of the 'spirit'.[13] It is indeed fascinating to find in lines written early in the Soviet period a clear resonance with the ideas of many young revolutionaries who came into prominence in the 1960s and who exhibit a basic revulsion at the very phenomenon registered in 1922 by Mayakovsky: the capture of the revolution by the party bureaucracy. The revolution to be finally effective must not be just an

[11] *PSS*, IV, p. 101.
[12] *PSS*, IV, p. 102. It's significant that those lines were cut from the version of the poem published in *Krasnaya nov* in 1922, No. 3.
[13] *PSS*, IV, p. 103.

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exchange of power, but rather a change in attitude and spirit that will do away with the old system of values. Mayakovsky in 1922 could see such a development only in the remote future.[14]

The Fourth International was actually intended as a kind of prologue to the poem which in its unfinished state now bears the title *The Fifth International*, planned as a poem about 'life in the commune in 500 years'. The original title was '*Tridevyatyi Internatsional*', and that fairy-tale expression for something in the far distant future is in close accord with the fantastic quality of the images in the two parts (out of a projected eight) that we have. For reasons not entirely clear Mayakovsky dropped that title.

The poem is more than a utopia. It is a fantastic allegory on the nature of the poet, his peculiar virtues and strengths, and his sometimes repeatable experiments in the sphere of imagination. It offers also an explicit statement on the role of the poet in foreseeing the future and assisting at its birth. Characteristically, he rejects poetry that 'sniffs roses' and then sings of them:

> For me
> It's an unbearable thought
> That roses were not invented by me.
> For 28 years I've been cultivating my mind
> Not to sniff roses
> But to invent them.[15]

Once again he insists on the superiority of human technology to nature's blind caprice, and he goes on to say that poetry should have the precision of mathematical formulas—certainly a surprising stance for the author of *The Cloud* and *The Flute*. But this is a rather obvious effort to associate poetry with the exact sciences, and a few lines later he insists that he wants to be a poetic 'Einstein'. One is tempted to read these lines as whimsical self parody.[16]

The basic conceit of the poem is the poet's own neck which he can screw out or in in order to raise himself to a higher vantage. This unscrewing of the neck is the special quality of a poet, who is curious about everything, and especially one whose vision and purposes are planet-wide, indeed universal. This conceit places him in the blue and cloud- or star-speckled heaven, whence he takes in the whole earth, and here there reappears that 'planetarity' of vision which was central to

[14] It should be noted that Soviet commentators explain such poems as a reaction to the 'bourgeois' revival which took place under NEP, and as a revulsion at the reappearance of successful NEP 'business-men', etc. That explanation simply doesn't square with the facts of the poem. We note (1) that proletarian writers are depicted as the carriers of philistinism, and (2) that the official honours Mayakovsky refuses are typical Soviet 'titles'.

[15] *PSS*, IV, p. 107.

[16] Jakobson, in his article 'On a Generation that Wasted Its Poets', tells us of Mayakovsky's interest at this time in Einstein's theory of relativity, and his intention to reduce poetry to 'mathematical formulas'. When Jakobson objected to this idea, Mayakovsky replied that of course he was referring only to 'trans sense' poetry. R. Jakobson, 'O pokolenii . . .', p. 25.

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Man, War and the World, and *Mystery-Bouffe*, and which figured to some extent even in *The Cloud* and *The Backbone Flute*.

We note that in *Man* the same super-terrestrial effects are used, but as a means of achieving detachment from the earthly 'can-can'; in *The Fifth International* the purpose is to propagate and prophesy a revolution. The old means are made to serve the new purpose, and the world under the poet now seethes with the fiery birth of soviets. This poem is an oblique answer to *Man*. As in that poem, Mayakovsky leaves earth and hovers in the sky, observing the planet in its various shapes, contours, and aspects. And as in that poem, he returns to earth after a period of years, but he doesn't find 'the old bald one' still in charge; he finds instead the 'life that had been dreamed of from the days of Fourier, Robert Owen, and Saint-Simon'. The time lapse required for this to come about runs well beyond the span of a single human life, and we shall see that in *About That* the time distance is so great that special arrangements must be made for his resurrection if he is to see the brave new world. As for the prospect of the poet's own lifetime he might well have said with Pasternak's Hamlet: 'Everything is sunk in pharisaism' (*vse tonet v fariseistve*).

I have suggested above that the poem is concerned, like so much of what he wrote, with the nature of the poet and his work. Not only is the poet equipped to see beyond the normal ken, he is also preternaturally sensitive to sound. A strikingly beautiful exercise in hyperbole expresses the idea that the poet's ears are as potent as his eyes:

> It's quiet as anything.
> Can't hear a thing.
> But my ears hear—
> My ears are used to it.
> First I couldn't even tell one note from another
> . . . . . .
> How can you tell the difference
> When somebody is cursing somebody out
> Quite loud and with the usual obscenities.
> But now
> It's not just that my ears can pick out a fly's flight—
> I can hear
> The pulsebeat on every little fly paw . . .
> But what's a fly—a fly is nothing.
> I can hear,
> Because I've got a kind of telescopic ear,
> How the millstones of the world
> Produce a deep major note. (364–82)

We note in this poem a shift in his concept of the poet's role from that of his early period. We have seen that in the *Tragedy* and many other early things the poet is a kind of *crucifixus*. But in *The Fifth International* the poet is hypersensitized, and his sight and hearing, linked to imagination, catch the very pulse of the future.

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A section of the poem entitled ' For the not fully literate ' is a proud statement of his purpose to remain the poet of his own ego, even though that ego, with all its senses sharpened, is in full focus on the socialist future. And the authentic voice of Mayakovsky in his chosen role of the ' *bogatyr* ' who will create the great epic (*bylina*) of the future can be heard in the lines:

If the world under me
Is less than an anthill (*muraveinika menee*)
Then what matters it which pronoun I use (*mestoimeniya*).
(521–24)

The theme of love, which came as such a surprise in *About That*, had actually reappeared in a poem entitled *I Love You* written early in 1922, almost a year before he began work on *About That*. The inspiration and recipient of this poetic gift was of course Lily Brik and the poem reflects a relatively happy and stable period in their relationship; it is his only poem about love that sounds a note of quiet contentment and as such it is a curiosity that repays study, as well as a masterpiece of the genre. The poem is divided into 10 brief, titled parts, each marking a stage in the passage of the poet's life, the climax of which is his meeting with ' Her ', followed by the sober ' conclusion ' that this love will be faithful and for ever.

LET us consider the 10 sections of the poem. The first section, ' That's the way it usually is ' (*Obyknovenno tak*), tells us that everybody is granted some love, but that what with business and incomes and the like the soil of the heart grows calluses.

The heart wears a body,
The body wears a shirt.
But that's not all!
One fellow—the idiot—
Fixed up false cuffs
And starched the shirt front.[17]

When they begin to get old, people think of what they're losing, but it's too late then. The section entitled ' A Kid ' (*Malchishkoi*) and indeed all of the sections devoted to the stages of Mayakovsky's life emphasize the poet's separateness from ordinary creatures; he is a special case. People are trained from childhood to do some kind of work, but he used to run off to the riverbank and loll about (*shlyalsya*) not doing a damn thing.

And mama got mad at me:
' You're a bad little boy! '

As a boy he only wanted to lie about and contemplate things. We recall that as a visitor in heaven in the poem *Man* he expressed the same simple

[17] *PSS*, IV, p. 85.

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need for which the 'busy beings' in that realm had no sympathy at all. But the sun (a frequent confidant) understands him, and says:

You can hardly see the fellow
But he has a heart, too.
He does the best he can.
But how can there be room
In the little space that's him
For me,
And the river,
And a hundred miles of cliff?!

'A Young Fellow', the next section, stresses the difference between Mayakovsky and other young fellows in the matter of education. Every idiot of either sex has learned his grammar, 'but I was kicked out of the fifth class and they kept tossing me into various jails'. Comfortable apartment-house lyrics he can hardly appreciate:

I learned about love
In the Butyrki prison.
What's the Bois de Boulogne to me?
What do I care about sighing and seascapes?
You know, I fell in love
With a 'Funeral Establishment'
Through the peephole of cell 103.

'My University' recounts the poet's experience of higher education, which was very different from that of his beloved:

You know French.
You can divide.
And multiply.
You decline beautifully.
Well, go ahead and decline!
But tell me—
Can you sing a duet with a house?
Do you know streetcar language?

And there follows a brief recapitulation of his early poetic intimacy with the city's streets and houses:

But I spoke
Only with houses.
Water-towers were my company.

'Grownup' once more underlines his special nature and his difference from others in the matter of love. Most grownups have business and rubles in their pockets. Love has its price and its purpose:

But I,
No roof over my head,
Stuck my big hands
Into my torn pockets
And just strolled around—
Wide-eyed.

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It's evening.
You put on your best clothes.
Relax with wives or widows.
But me,
Moscow crushed me in its embrace
With the endless noose of its Sadovayas.[18]

He tried to catch the very heartbeat of the city, opening himself to all passion, to the sun and to puddles. Most people have their hearts in their breasts, but not him:

But my anatomy has gone mad.
I'm all over one solid heart
Pounding everywhere.

In *The Cloud* he announced that he was 'all lips and nothing else', and the fact that now he is 'all heart' has certain serious consequences. Far more than possible, far more than necessary, the heavy lump of his heart grew to a huge bulk of love and of hatred, and his body is crushed under the burden and yoke he must bear. Swollen with the milk of his own verses, he still could find nowhere to pour it out. In the section 'A Cry' (*Zovu*) he tells of raising his burden like a weight-lifter and carrying it along like an acrobat. Like an alarm bell summoning the populace to a fire, he cries out:

Here it is!
Here!
Take it from me!

But all the nice ladies shied away from him:

We'd like something a little less.
We'd like a little tango maybe . . .

But then 'You' came! The lines that tell of Lily's approach, her business-like (*delovito*) inspection of him, and of how she saw, in spite of his size and his roar, that he was just a little boy, are certainly unique because of the startling childlike images that communicate the delightful onset of pure love:

You took and
Snatched my heart away
And you just started to play with it.
Like a little girl playing with her ball.
. . .
And I was so full of joy!
I don't feel it any more—
That yoke!
I forgot myself with the sheer delight,
And I skipped about
Like an Indian at his wedding.

[18] The Sadovaya Ring is a boulevard that encircles Moscow.

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I was so happy,
I felt so good!

The three final parts drive home the point that this love is reciprocal and final, and the poem ends with a solemn vow:

I swear—
that I love you,
Faithfully and forever.

Part I: The Prisoner

That was the moment of which Mayakovsky might have said, paraphrasing Goethe, 'Stay as you are, never move, never change', and indeed the poem 'I Love You', like Keats' 'sylvan historian' fixed a transient moment and holds it fast in spite of the cruel changes that occurred in the poet's own life. The poem *About That*, to which we now turn, explores and examines a bewildering complex of emotional vicissitudes, and some comment is necessary on the circumstances of its composition as well as the 'idea' of the poem.

It is noteworthy and perhaps not surprising that Mayakovsky in his public statements tended to minimize the significance of the love story, directing attention instead to matters of social import in the poem. It's true that his first announcement of the idea of the poem spoke of love and nothing else. In the earliest version of his autobiography, *I Myself*, published in 1922, under the section for that year he said, 'Thought of an idea: about love. A huge poem. I'll finish it next year.' But in the 1928 edition there is no mention of a poem about love under that year or the year 1923, but under the latter year he says: 'Wrote *About That*. About our way of life in general but based on personal material.'[19] And when in April, 1923 he recited parts of the poem he emphasized once again the social rather than the personal component: '. . . in those parts of the poem that I've read [to you] the crucial thing is: *our way of life* (*byt*). And by that I mean a way of life which hasn't changed at all and which is now our vilest enemy, and turns us into philistines.'[20] We might argue that this shift in his idea of the poem, and perhaps even in its content, was conditioned by the political and social environment, by the expectations of his colleagues (at least some of them) in the *Lef* milieu, by the exigencies of his own reputation as a propagandist and poster-writer who had foregone, it seemed, the love theme. The social pressures upon him were so complex that no simple statement can be made about them. The foot that trod upon the 'throat of his song' was certainly his own, though his motivation was meshed with the

[19] *PSS*, I, p. 374 and p. 26.
[20] *PSS*, IV, p. 436.

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demands of the government, the society, and the times. Paperny's [21] fascinating study of the manuscripts of the poem reveals that as Mayakovsky worked on the poem he consciously softened its pessimism, emphasized positive notes, and confuted his own individualism by insisting that happiness can be found only in the collective. For instance the suicide motif is vividly present in an early version when the word gun-muzzle (*dulo*) appears as a possible anodyne for the poet's pain, but that word was removed in later versions, and Paperny demonstrates that in his work on the poem Mayakovsky regularly muted the tragic notes.[22] In other words, a kind of self-censorship was at work, though it was only partially successful; and yet there still remains in the poem a heavy weight of tragedy. Mayakovsky's revisions in the course of working on it were probably conditioned by the demands of his milieu, and it may be that the earlier and more 'tragic' variants were nearer to his real meaning. Nevertheless the only complete poem we have to work with is the version he published.

It is important to note that Mayakovsky wrote *About That* during a period of seclusion and self-examination and the poem is a record of a kind of psychic self-communication. It belongs among the long poems beginning with *The Cloud*, each of which is a kind of lyric monologue that explores the distressful pendulations of the poet's own ego. The occasion for his withdrawal at this time was a temporary misunderstanding, to put it mildly, with Lily Brik, who found she could not endure the excessive demands of her great lover (we must recall and emphasize that there is no evidence she loved him) whose alternating fits of jealousy and depression made him a difficult companion. They agreed on a separation of two months, though perhaps it should be put somewhat more bluntly: she threw him out (*prognala ego proch*).

The poem was written, then, during a period of voluntary seclusion from 28 December 1922 to 28 February 1923 when he seldom left his room and met with friends and associates only when absolutely necessary for business. The confinement may have been, as he himself suggests, a period of self-examination, a struggle with his 'old' self out of which he would emerge, as he put it, 'a completely new man'. According to

[21] S. Paperny, 'Mayakovsky v rabote nad poemoi "Pro eto",' *Literaturnoye nasledstvo*, 65 (1958), pp. 217 ff.

Three manuscripts of the poem were preserved, a rough draft, a clean copy with corrections and additions, and a clean copy with a few corrections. They were preserved only by accident; Mayakovsky had actually thrown them away but Lily Brik herself, with an eye to future value, recovered them and asked Mayakovsky to make her a gift of them. An incomplete version of the manuscript variants appeared in the first *Complete Works* published under the editorship of Lily Brik herself (1934–38). Nikolai Aseev published in that edition a long and perceptive essay which traces the growth of the poem as Mayakovsky worked on it: 'Rabota Mayakovskogo nad poemoi "*Pro eto*"', PSS (1934), V, p. 21. Another analysis of the same material is V. V. Trenin and N. I. Khardzhiev, 'V masterstvoi stikha. Zametki o rabote Mayakovskogo nad poemoi "Pro eto"', *Literaturnyi kritik* (1933), No. 7, pp. 134–59.

[22] Paperny, op. cit. pp. 228–30.

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this interpretation the poem is a kind of therapeutic objectification of his inner problems. Certainly it is that, in a sense, though it can hardly be said that he emerged from it a 'new man'.[23]

The circumstances of its composition explain many otherwise puzzling matters in the poem itself, and the difficulties with Lily occasioned the production of a number of letters that are masterpieces of direct, uninhibited poetic prose, and that reveal as biographical fact the emotional state that took literary form in the poem *About That*. These letters, published in *Literaturnoye nasledstvo* in 1958,[24] are insistent and importunate pleas for relief and sympathy, and a few cries from them should be translated:

(End of December, 1922)

Lily Dear,

I see you've decided. I know that my pestering is painful to you. But, Lily sweetheart, what happened to me today is so awful that I can't help grasping at a final straw, this letter.

It's never been worse than this—really I must have grown too much. When you threw me out before I believed we'd meet again. Now I feel I've been torn away from my life, that there'll never be anything any more. Without you there's no life for me. I've always said that and I've always known it. Now I feel it, I feel it with my whole being. Everything that used to give me satisfaction is worthless now—repulsive even.

I'm not threatening, I'm not imploring forgiveness. I'll never, never do anything to myself—I'm much too much afraid for mama and Liuda. I've also reached a kind of sentimental adulthood. . . .

Yet I can't help writing, I can't help asking you to forgive me for everything. . . .

But even if you don't answer, you alone are in my thoughts. The way I loved you seven years ago I still love you this very minute. Whatever you want, whatever you command I'll do right away, and I'll do it with joy. How terrible it is to part when you know you're in love and when you know you're to blame for the parting.

Here I sit in a cafe and groan. The waitresses laugh at me. What a terrible thought that from now on this is my life. . . .

If this letter makes you feel anything but pain and distaste, then answer me, for Christ's sake answer me right away. I'll hurry home and I'll wait. If you don't my grief will be terrible, terrible.

I kiss you and I'm all yours,

Me.

It's ten o'clock now. If you don't answer by eleven I'll know there's no point in waiting.

[23] Paperny, op. cit. p. 228.

[24] *Literaturnoye nasledstvo*, 65 (1958), pp. 128 ff.

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Lily did answer, though what she said has not yet been revealed, but Mayakovsky's next letters are calmer and more hopeful. The epistolary evidence is crucial in any critical evaluation of the poem. The extravagant and desperate demand for his woman, so beautifully expressed in the letter, is realized in the poem in the image of a disconsolate and roaring bear.

THOUGH he insisted in public on the poem's social significance, the introduction, which purports to answer the question 'About what, about that?' announces unmistakably that it's about love. A succession of original and powerful images conveys the imperative force of love and the absolute necessity to speak of it. This 'theme' is a prayer to Buddha, and it sharpens a black man's knife against his master. If there's anything human on the planet Mars it's scribbling about love too. It will make a poor cripple soar like an eagle and dazzle the sun with verses. When it comes its command is *truth* and *beauty*. Even if your arms are stretched out on the cross, when it comes you'll hum a waltz softly. It dives deep under the daily routine and hides in the recesses of instinct, but don't dare forget it or suppress it! It will erupt and tear your heart out of your hide! Thus Mayakovsky insists in the introduction that the theme of love ('so petty, so personal') is inescapable, that in spite of his involvement with the daily routine of the revolution, he had to return to it once more. And yet the word 'love' is never used: the poem speaks of 'that', or 'that theme', or 'it', and only in the very last line of the introduction is a blank space left where the reader himself must supply the word 'love' (*lyubov*) in order to make a rhyme with 'foreheads' (*lbov*).

The poem consists of an introduction, two parts, and a conclusion, and is further subdivided into a number of titled sections, the last three of which are entitled 'Faith', 'Hope' and 'Love'. Part I is called 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol', and the reference to Oscar Wilde's work is richly suggestive of the poem's outward and inward meanings. Obviously it refers to his voluntary confinement during the period of writing, to the jail without bars where he suffered over the poem. But we must remember also that the prisoner of Wilde's 'Ballad' is a man condemned to death because he *killed* his beloved, condemned, that is, because of a fatal overflow of love. And Wilde's prisoner is emphatic as to the close intermingling of love and hate, and the issue of both in death.

> Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
> By each let this be heard,
> Some do it with a bitter look,
> Some with a flattering word.
> The coward does it with a kiss,
> The brave man with a sword!

Mayakovsky's lover is likewise condemned because he loved 'too much', because in his savage jealousy he was ready, like an animal, to devour

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his beloved, and in his animal fury 'scratched the floor of his den with all 20 claws'. Wilde's 'Ballad' is about a man condemned to death, and in its original conception the death of the lover was also a central theme of the poem *About That*. We have already seen that direct references to suicide were present in early drafts and that the work on the poem would seem to represent, as Aseev put it, a 'victory over thoughts of death and of suicide'. But the victory was not total; the poem is deeply concerned with the theme and the thought of suicide, and there is a clear reference in it to 'healing death'. Mayakovsky's 'Reading Gaol', his apartment in Lyubyansky Lane, is the cell where he awaits execution.

The thematic function of Part I is to affirm the Mayakovsky of the earlier poem *Man*, the frustrated lover and defeated human being, as a fact that still exists. The prosperous propaganda poet of the twenties cannot escape him. He 'still stands' on the bridge over the Neva, still unreconciled to the earthly 'can-can' and to 'middle-class happiness', still loving and unloved, still an enemy of the comfortable life. This Mayakovsky needs help, he begs to be saved, he demands that the Party and the state, with which Vladimir Vladimirovich is now so intimate, 'confiscate' and annul his grief.

In *The Cloud* the fire in his heart became a literally burning building with firemen and hoses and helmets; in this poem the electric shock wave of his emotion gives rise to a legend about some unbelievable natural phenomenon. We note that the fantastic hyperbole is couched in the homeliest phrases, in talk about a ham-bone and a bargain and Saturday night on Myasnitskaya.

Full of primitive, savage jealousy, the poet, so that he may properly howl his rage and grief, turns into a bear. In a passage which miraculously imitates the clipped phrases of sobbing speech Mayakovsky tells us how a bear would weep:

I don't know
Whether they cry,
Or not,
Bears.
But if they do cry
Then that's just how,
That's the way:
Without any false note of sentiment
They just moan, pouring out
Long ravines of howling.
And just so that bearish Balshin
Awakened by my howl
Growls on the other side of the wall. (354–64)

An intimate detail of Mayakovsky's housekeeping, so to speak, is introduced in the figure of the neighbour who slept next door to him behind a thin wall, whose name was indeed Balshin, and who did insist on his right to peace and quiet.

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In the section of the poem entitled 'A Room that Floats Away' a dream suggested by the infantile sensation of a cold wetness in the bed, the result, however, of his flooding tears, grows into an authentic nightmare in which the room and everything in it suddenly flows into the night, becoming nothing less than the Neva itself, and from this point forward a dream reality dominates the whole movement and all the images of the poem. We have already noted the frequent occurrence of water in the poetry of Mayakovsky and suggested the symbolic connection of that element in his imagination with love, with death, or with the universe. The whole world 'sort of floated away' in *Mystery-Bouffe*, and here too his firm four-cornered room with its solid furniture liquefies in the poem and carries him off, a sad, white bear pillowed on an ice floe in the Neva river. The dream fantasy maintains a tenuous connection with the prosaic reality of bed and sleep through the pillow on which the poet-bear floats, and the bedstead which may be a bridge:

A white bear
I've crawled onto an ice-floe,
And I float on my pillow-floe.
The banks rush by, one view after another,
Under me the ice of my pillow.
There's a breeze from Lake Ladoga.
The water rushes.
And my pillow-raft flies along.
I float,
Feverish on my floe-pillow . . .
And I had to float
Under an arched bedstead—
Or maybe it was a bridge.
And that's the way it was—
Just me and the wind. (428–45)

The last two lines attempt to convey the sense of a purely animal state of being in which the bear stands alone in comradeship and contention with nature. But the bear's journey is not aimless. His progress down the stream does indeed take him to a bridge, where he finds the *man* from the poem *Man* who stood on that very spot seven years ago and thought of his own death. The 'man' needs help, and he suspects that Vladimir Vladimirovich, his other self, has betrayed him by worming his way into the conventional world of tight houses, marriage, family happiness and satisfied paunches. The old Mayakovsky utters a plea to the 'new' one not to sell him out, not to accept the banality of material bliss, not to become reconciled to the 'system'. The real self still stands on the bridge, still suffers, still needs help, still wants love Vladimir Vladimirovich will never be loved or be happy until *this man* is saved.

Vladimir! Stop! Don't abandon me!
Why didn't you let me throw myself down then?!
Smash my heart out with a single stroke against the piers? . . .

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Don't try to run away—
It's me calling you! . . .

Pass an executive resolution!
Confiscate my pain—annul it. (498–538)

And Part I ends with the desperate cry:

Save him! Save him! Save him!
There, on the bridge, over the Neva there's a man! (572–76)

Part II: The Eve of Christmas

The title of Part II, 'The Eve of Christmas' (*Noch pod Rozhdestvo*), involves, like the title of Part I, a literary reminiscence, this time of Gogol, with whose story of almost the same name (*Noch pered Rozhdestvom*) Mayakovsky deliberately associates his own work. The association of Part I with Oscar Wilde's poem, as we have seen, pointed to the poem's inner meaning, and it is simply ruled out that the title of Part II is an accident or an aberration. Moreover Gogol was one of Mayakovsky's favourites among the classics, and the only one among them whom he never abused and never 'cast overboard' from his steamship. Andrei Bely pointed out the close relationship of Mayakovsky's hyperbolic images with those of Gogol, and offered numerous examples of verbal experimentation that are basically similar in the work of both writers.[25] And the Soviet scholar N. Khardzhiev has located additional thematic, figurative and verbal correspondences that could not be accidental.[26] The Gogolian title of Part II underlines that element of fantasy which the work shares with Gogol's short story, and prepares the reader for a series of strange metamorphoses. The title has also suggested to some a possible religious significance in the poem, though that aspect is certainly not developed.[27] The direct reference would seem to be, rather, to the cosy Yuletide scenes from whose false warmth both 'the man on the bridge' and 'Vladimir Vladimirovich' exclude themselves. And of course there is an autobiographical reference to the season during which the misunderstanding with Lily and the poet's own solitary confinement had begun.

Part II describes the poet's futile effort to engage his family and friends in the project of saving 'the man on the bridge'. In his bear's guise he returns to Moscow and (we recall that this always happens to Mayakovsky in his various animal transformations) the passers-by buffet him, ridicule him, and abuse him with mother oaths. A saviour is

[25] A. Bely, *Masterstvo Gogolya* (Moscow, 1934), in the chapter entitled 'Gogol and Mayakovsky'.

[26] N. Khardzhiev, 'Zametki o Mayakovskom', *Literaturnoye nasledstvo*, 65, pp. 397–401.

[27] M. Nag, 'Fantastical Realism; the Problem of Realism in Mayakovsky's "Pro eto"', in *Scando-Slavica*, IV (1959).

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needed for the man on the bridge and he thinks he sees one approaching, but the apparition before him is a second transformation of his own self—of which there are now three in the poem. At first he thinks it may be the 'saviour' himself, Jesus:

There's the saviour!
Looks like Jesus.
Quiet and good,
with a crown of moonlight.
He's closer. A smooth young face,
But it's not Jesus.
This one is gentler—
and younger. (650–60)

Who could be gentler than gentle Jesus if not the poet himself, who had of course already established his own role as Christ and Saviour. The boy he sees is a young communist who seems now to pray, and now to wave his arms as though addressing a meeting. The prayerful attitude may not suggest Mayakovsky, but the arm-waving is an unmistakable characteristic, and a clear signal that we have to do with another of the poet's 'doubles', one that encompasses two aspects of his character. Certainly there is an echo of Blok's *The Twelve* in the sudden association of a revolutionary with Jesus Christ; even the crown (*venchik*) that adorns the figure of Christ in the last scene of that poem reappears in this passage (648–52). But the boy, caught up in a tragic love story, is intent on suicide, and again there is a reminiscence of Blok's technique in *The Twelve* when Mayakovsky's lines suddenly take on the rhythm of a sentimental love song (*romans*):

The boy walked on, his eyes fixed on the sunset.
And the sunset was matchlessly yellow.
Even the snow was yellow near the Tver gate.
But the boy walked on, seeing nothing. (676–80)

The 'gypsy love song' abruptly breaks off and

He walked on.
Suddenly he stopped.
In the silk of the hand
cold steel.

Then the song resumes, the wind picks the boy's pocket, and we learn that the young suicide had penned a simple farewell note:

Farewell . . .
I'm ending it . . .
Please don't blame anyone . . .
(695–98)

'How much like me' is the poet's comment, and it has often been pointed out that the phrase in *About That* 'Please don't blame anyone' is prophetic of the poet's own suicide note, written seven years later: 'Don't blame anyone for my death . . .' This strange and touching

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incident, which the poet treats with gentle irony, may actually describe one of the known occasions on which the young Mayakovsky himself attempted suicide.[28] This conjecture would seem to be supported both by the clear identification of the young communist with Mayakovsky himself ('How like me/that is!/Awful'), and by the definiteness of the locale where the fictional suicide supposedly occurred: Petrovsky Park, just beyond the Tver gate. Thus the incident of the young boy's suicide may point to the past as well as to the future, and the phrase 'Don't blame anyone' he may have used in more than one note. In any case, that phrase in both contexts is another literary reminiscence, this time of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, where the suicide Stavrogin leaves the unbearably laconic note 'Don't blame anyone. I did it myself'. ('*Nikogo ne vinit. Ya sam*'.) The source of Mayakovsky's phrase in Dostoevsky is very clear from the earliest variant of that line in the manuscripts of *About That*, which corresponds word for word with Stavrogin's message.[29] And we shall soon find other striking reminiscences of Dostoevsky in the poem.

He turns next to his family, particularly to his mother. The poem he wrote in 1913, 'A Few Words about My Mama', reflected the severe wrench he felt at leaving mama to do his own work on the streets of Moscow; mama was the one to whom he turned in an extremity of suffering in *The Cloud;* it's not surprising that mama should once again be his first recourse: 'Instinct drew me to the family burrow', he says. Was Mayakovsky mother-fixated? Possibly. It's clear in any case that mama and his sisters were a problem. Mama as he enters greets him with the conventional phrases proper to the season:

> 'Volodya! You're home!
> For Christmas!
> Oh what a joy! What a joy this is!'

The frenetic lines in which he begs her to help the 'man on the bridge' she answers with a clichéd exhortation to compose himself and calm down. Clearly there's no help for him in the family burrow:

> What do you mean then ? !
> Do you exchange love for your afternoon tea?
> Is love's place taken by the darning of socks?

In the section entitled 'A Journey with Mother' he makes the point that the whole universe is spotted with philistines and families. Even in Africa the black man treats his little family to the afternoon tea, something that has now, for Mayakovsky, become a final symbol of middle-class happiness. The old and stereotyped values and virtues have even found comfort and repose for themselves under the terrible wing of the revolution:

[28] See Jakobson, 'Novye stroki . . .', p. 191.
[29] PSS, IV, p. 339, variants to ll. 695–97.

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October thundered through.
It judged and punished
And under its fiery-feathered wing
You made a place, and laid out the chinaware. (805–11)

Next he turns for help to his friends, and there ensues a scene of ineffable satiric comedy in the Yule-warmed apartment of one Fekla Davydovna, her husband and their family, where there is an assortment of verminous party guests rendered loud and silly by liquor. The details of Soviet *byt*—moustaches, cockroaches, mice, and spider-webs, canaries, geraniums and family pictures—are vividly present. The adaptation of old religious symbols to the ideological and practical exigencies of the new order is illustrated in the transformation of protective fairies and spirits into a new variety of guardian angel: the lodger with influence and authority who will protect the family's living space (890–92). Both old and new symbols are alike appropriated and exploited by these indomitable philistines: 'Jesus tips his thorny crown and bows politely, and Marx, bitted and haltered in a pink frame' [an image first used in the poem *About Trash*] 'pulls his full weight in the middle-class ménage' (915–20).

But in this very apartment, out of the enemy's clutter and bric-à-brac, a fourth 'double' of Mayakovsky suddenly materializes, and it becomes clear that the philistine poison is firmly lodged in the poet himself:

But the most awful thing was:
by his size, his complexion
His clothes—even by his walk
I recognized one of them.
My very own self—me!
As like me as a twin. (893–903)

Among these acquaintances his plea to save 'the man on the bridge' is greeted with obtuse ridicule. The next sub-section is entitled 'No Way Out' (*Devatsya nekuda*), another phrase that occurred both in an earlier poem (*The Cloud*) and in his farewell letter, and which helps to tie into a single unity both his personal and his literary biography. There is no way out and nowhere for him to go, nowhere *else* to go, that is, but to *her*, and in a scene which even in its minutiae recalls Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* he returns to the scene of his 'crime'—*her* apartment. Like Raskolnikov, he climbs a dark and filthy staircase:

The pain in my heart, never silent,
forges link to link.
This is the way Raskolnikov
who murdered
Came back to ring the bell. (1133–38)

Dostoevsky's scene is recalled in the poet's slinking behaviour, his darting into corners to avoid being observed, his intense awareness of corridor and stairway noises, his eavesdropping at the door of 'her'

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apartment. The scene recalls, moreover, not only *Crime and Punishment* but also *The Double*, especially the scene in that novel where Golyadkin Junior hides below the window of an apartment where there is a party in progress to which he has not been invited. The poet as he stands outside Lily's door overhears conversations each remark of which he, the rejected one, interprets paranoically as referring to himself.

This is not, of course, the first reminiscence of Dostoevsky in the poem *About That*: we have already observed the correspondence of the young communist's suicide note with Stavrogin's. Even the title of the poem *About That* is resonant of a number of passages in Dostoevsky's novels, as Lily Brik has pointed out.[30] Raskolnikov never names his crime as robbing or murder, but always refers only to '*that*', and presses his own thoughts 'about *that*'. In *The Possessed* the following exchange occurs between Stavrogin and his mad wife, Maria Timofeyevna: 'You must have had a bad dream. . . .' 'But how did you know that I dreamed *about that*? . . .' In *The Brothers Karamazov* the pure young man Alyosha Karamazov stops his ears whenever anyone speaks 'about that': 'He couldn't listen to certain words, nor to a certain kind of conversation about women.' We note that Mayakovsky's poem *About That* never mentions the word love. An apparently minor but very interesting correspondence with *Crime and Punishment* is the situation of the 'man on the bridge', who, exactly like Raskolnikov, leans on the railing and thinks of throwing himself down.[31] Still another is the passage at the beginning of this section in which the word *obukh* (blunt end of an axe-head) occurs in a context strongly reminiscent of the distraught Raskolnikov's awakening from a troubled sleep at the sound of street noises outside his window, and his horrified realization that the time has come to take his axe and be off to perform his deed:

> Thus with an axe they break into sleep,
> And make a mark on sleepers' foreheads—
> Then all at once—
> Everything is gone
> And all you see is the butt of the axe.
> And thus the drum of streets
> Enters your sleep
> And all at once you remember
> That here's your grief
> And there's that corner
> And she's around it—
> The culprit. (1093–1106)

These are some of the most striking reminiscences of Dostoevsky in the poem, but there are still others. The subtitle 'No Way Out' recalls

[30] L. Brik, 'Predlozheniya issledovatelyam', *Voprosy literatury*, 9, (1966), pp. 203–08.
[31] L. Brik, op. cit. p. 205. On this subject see also I. Corten, 'The Influence of Dostoevsky on Mayakovsky's Poem "Pro eto"', *Studies Presented to Roman Jakobson by His Students* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968).

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the drunkard Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment*, who also had 'no way out', and pointedly queried Raskolnikov as to whether the latter really understood the meaning of that phrase. We will presently address ourselves to the problem of the significance of the many reminiscences of Dostoevsky in *About That*.

But to return to the action of the poem. There is no hope in 'her' house either for 'the man on the bridge'. 'She' and her friends are having a noisy party dancing the one-step and the two-step. Through the walls of her apartment, as he stands in the corridor outside, his preternaturally sensitive ears pick up scraps of conversations that are made up of smart trivia without any real wit. The dreadful conclusion is forced upon him, and upon the reader, that even 'she', like the girl in *The Cloud* who mentioned 'money, passion, and Jack London', like the 'red-head with a painted face' in *The Backbone Flute* who had 'a husband, and music on her piano', and, if we may anticipate a little, like his last Parisian love, is a philistine and a member of the enemy camp—incapable of helping or even understanding 'the man on the bridge'. But still he loves her. In verse he speaks more truthfully than other people (or even than himself), and it's in verse that he speaks of his love:

> Where, my dear one, where, my sweet,
> Have I ever wronged my love in a song?
> In a song every sound is a confession, and a call.
> But in a song not a word can be changed.[32] (1240–48)

And when he curses the established way of life (of which she is a part) he doesn't mean her, he avoids mentioning her!

Again there is a sharp shift in the images and a quick geographical progression through the towns on the road from Petrograd to Moscow, where he confronts once more the 'man on the bridge'. Images of crucifixion now appear, and he represents himself as 'nailed' to his sorrow, and presents to the 'man' as the only possible solution a love which transcends the individual and embraces all human beings. To put it in other terms, Mayakovsky can be saved only if he transforms his *eros* into *agape*.[33] There is no real salvation for *oneself alone*, and his own suffering he now offers as a sacrifice:

> I'm waiting for [love] to come
> To all the unloved world at once . . .
>
> To the whole world-wide human mass.
> I've stood here seven years I'll stand a hundred more,
> Nailed here waiting for that . . .
>
> And I must stand here, I stand here for everyone,
> For each one I weep, for each I atone,[34] (1328–42)

[32] The last line is a phrase usually applied to the *byliny*.

[33] For an illuminating discussion of the relationship of *eros* and *agape* in Mayakovsky's poetry see L. L. Stahlberger, *The Symbolic System of Mayakovsky*, pp. 91–93, 136–37

[34] The last line: '*Za vsekh rasplachús*
Za vsekh raspláchus.'

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It has seemed to some readers at this point that there is a flaw in the structure of the poem since nothing in the progress of the work up to this point has prepared the ground for this sudden moralistic departure. Soviet commentators emphasize of course the evidence of a healthy development in the poet's 'world view' in the direction of a 'collective' morality, and it would seem at first sight that something of the sort is intended. However, we shall soon advance the thesis that the abrupt reversal from total and uncompromising egotism to a universal love reflects not Marx or the Soviet ethos, but rather, like so much of what is in the poem, a literary source, Dostoevsky.

Another cinematic scene-shift takes the poet to Paris and Montparnasse where a brief adventure with the prostitutes convinces him that there's no help there either, since the Parisian whore insists on her own Parisian way of life. When he gets up on a table and cries out for help 'calling somewhere . . . to save someone', the *patron* explains the phenomenon with a single word: 'a Russian'.

The crucifixion images now become more insistent, when he appears above the Caucasus, the place of his origin, with his arms outstretched cross-like. Guilt and fear now dominate his emotions: 'They see me. From here I'm all visible. Look—the Caucasus swarms with Pinkertons. They've noticed. They give the signal.' Everyone attacks, insults, and *challenges* him. They spit on their palms till they're all wet, then

> With their hands/with the wind
> without mercy/uncounted times
> they slap my face into ribbons. (1473–77)

At this point, then, the old *Slap in the Face* which he and his comrades had administered to the public in 1912 is now returned to him with heavy measure. And they kill him, all of them together:

> No/you our inveterate enemy
> Another like you once fell into our hands—a hussar![35]
>
> From all rifles and batteries
> From every Mauser and Browning
> at a hundred paces/at ten/at two
> Point blank—one cartridge after another . . .
>
> Get rid of him/lead into his heart!
> So he can't even tremble!
> But in the end/everything ends.
> Trembling ends too. (1512–27)

We note here the recurrence of the theme of the duel in which the poet is killed, a reminiscence of both Pushkin and Lermontov, and the destruction of the poet as unnecessary and even dangerous reminds us once again of the poem *Man*, a principal theme of which, we recall, was the rejection of the poet by the busy beings of the heavenly as well as

[35] The reference is of course to the poet Lermontov.

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the earthly realm. But in this poem there is a sudden emotional transition which prepares us, despite the poet's death, for the joyful utopian vision of the Epilogue. Only a few shreds of him are left, but these fragments of the poet still fly—a red flag on the Kremlin tower. We recognize the repeated image from its first occurrence in the *Tragedy* (1913), where the shreds of the poet's soul are impaled on chimneys, and also from *The Cloud* (1915), where he stamped out his soul and offered it to the people, 'a bloody banner'. Here the poet's being is torn with suffering and broken into shreds, but in the process he nonetheless triumphs. His fate is still to save the people through his own suffering.

The Golden Age

From the ending of Part II it is clear that the poet has two choices, either he kills himself or the philistines kill him. As far as his own possessive and individual love is concerned, either he kills the object of that love, or it kills him. Yet the ending of Part II, as we've seen, is a sudden, lyrical anticipation of happiness and light, and it recalls the bright optimism which closed the poem about the sun, and which totally suffuses the final part of the poem *Very Good*; in this case the abrupt transition prepares the way for a dream of the golden age presented in the form of an official 'application' (*Prosheniye*) addressed to an unnamed chemist of the thirtieth century, petitioning him most earnestly to use the chemical processes that by then have been developed to resurrect the poet Mayakovsky, so that he may 'live out his life really' (*svoye dozhit*). This 'application' to be resurrected contains a surging, exultant paean, issuing from the poem like a dazzling ray in the darkness of a tomb, to the earth and life on earth, and the joyous future when all men will have a single father, the world, and a single mother, the earth, lines which are virtually impossible to translate because of the absence of gender in English:

> So that our family should become
> From now on
> Our father—at least the world,
> the earth at the very least our mother. (1807–13)

It is true that the thoughts of suicide and death which occurred in Parts I and II are not fully overcome, but the poet's resolute acceptance of life tends to dominate those thoughts, though at times it would seem he protests too much:

> I'm not going to give anybody the satisfaction
> Of seeing me stretched out with a bullet in me . . .
>
> You can get me from an ambush with a knife,
> But I'm not offering my forehead to any Danteses.
> Four times I'll grow old—four times I'll be rejuvenated,
> Before I get to the grave.
> And whenever I die, I'll die singing. (1619–31)

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But immediately these lines are followed by dismal thoughts:

> But wherever you finally stretch out
> Death is still death.
> It's fearful, not to love,
> It's awful, not to dare.
> There's a bullet or a knife for everyone.
> But what about me—and where? (1636–43)

And the suicide clearly speaks again in these lines:

> Maybe, in my childhood, deep down in it,
> I could find ten bearable days. (1644–47)

Yet these lines are in beautiful but precarious balance with statements such as this, which accept earthly life:

> What am I to do/if I/totally
> With every ounce of my heart,
> Believed in this life/in this world,
> And still believe? (1661–69)

Only on earth does Mayakovsky seek his paradise, and the utopia he foresees in the epilogue is one in which science has conquered the material problems of earthly existence, including death, and universal, all-pervasive love has conquered the social problems. When the human race as a whole learns the lesson learned, and preached, by the 'man on the bridge' that the only possible love is one which transcends individual demands and embraces all human beings, then men will no longer live as a sacrifice each to his own miserable little house and home, love will leave the private bed and board and stride through the universe. (1790–1800) [36]

I've suggested above that the salvation offered the 'man on the bridge'—unselfish love and the sacrifice of the self—probably has its origin in Dostoevsky. Moreover there is a specific work of Dostoevsky in which the union of selfless and universal love is linked with the golden age of human happiness. The epilogue of the poem *About That* has so many correspondences with Dostoevsky's *Dream of a Ridiculous Man* (1877) that, considering the evidence already accumulated of a strong Dostoevskian element in the poem, there is little doubt that Mayakovsky drew important inspiration from that particular work. Moreover the dream of a golden age is a recurrent one in Dostoevsky's novels: Versilov in *A Raw Youth*, Stavrogin in *The Possessed* both dreamed, we must remember, of a heaven on earth.

DOSTOEVSKY'S *Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, and in particular its probable influence on Mayakovsky, may be better understood if we place that story and its principal characters in a wider context. There are in Dostoevsky's works many characters who may be loosely described

[36] '*Chtob vsei vselennoi shla lyubov.*'

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as 'underground men' in the sense that they cultivate a protective isolation from contact with other human beings. These characters, in fact, don't recognize fully the real existence of other human beings. The underground man in the story *Notes From Underground* spent 40 years accumulating spite in isolation; *Mr Prokharchin*, completely out of touch with reality, lives alone in his corner and accumulates money; the young recluse of *The Landlady* lives apart with his highly personal poetic visions; Raskolnikov hugs to himself his 'theory' that he himself is a superman; Arkady in *The Adolescent* has an 'idea' that he will become wealthy and gain dominion over others, and he will not share his 'idea' with anyone; Kirillov in *The Possessed* is effectively shut off from other human beings by his theory that in order to achieve complete freedom he must kill himself; Stavrogin in the same novel is different from the others in that he has no plan or idea or theory, but for him moral values do not exist, nor do people exist as beings that have any claim on his affections. In *The Dream* this character type has reached, so to speak, the outer limits of isolation. His 'shell' is a metaphysical one: he becomes convinced that only he himself and nothing else exists, and that therefore nothing in the world matters. He decides to kill himself, and thereby end at a stroke his own existence and that of everything else. The revolver is purchased and ready, and the idea of suicide actually comforts him. He found, however, that *something* did matter. A little girl in desperate need of help approached him on the street one dismal night, but he angrily brushed her away. Yet he felt a twinge of pity for the little girl and this opened a chink in his tough armadillo-cloak. He could not bring himself to end his life. In a dream he did shoot himself (in the heart) and seemed transported through space (as happens so frequently to Mayakovsky in his poetry) to a distant star, the geographical outlines of which seen from a great height (a situation duplicated in *War and the World*, *The Fifth International* and some other things) closely resembled our own earth. But on this star human beings still live in a state of innocence and harmony, and the secret of their happiness is the unbounded love of each one for every other one:

> They knew love and they begat children, but I never noticed in them those outbursts of cruel sensuality which overtake almost everybody on our earth whether man or woman, and are the only source of almost every sin of our human race. . . . There were no quarrels or jealousy among them, and they did not even know what the words meant. Their children were the children of them all, for they were all one family.[37]

Dostoevsky's distrust of the human reason and of modern science shows itself when the 'Ridiculous Man' *corrupts* these innocents, like Satan in the garden of Eden, by introducing them to the fruits of knowledge, and Mayakovsky rejected that viewpoint. In any case the story ends

[37] F. M. Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, X, p. 433–34.

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when the 'Ridiculous Man' awakens to a new realization of the meaning of human life and the source of happiness as universal love and says finally: 'And I did find that little girl. . . . And I shall go on! I shall go on!'

The points of contact between this story and Mayakovsky's poem are too numerous, it would seem, to be accidental. Moreover, Mayakovsky's own life at the time he wrote the poem was not unlike that of the 'Ridiculous Man', especially his isolation from most of humanity and his recurrent thoughts of suicide: the revolver and the 'healing death' it may bring are a real presence in the poem *About That*, even in its final and more optimistic variant.

Of course we must not lose sight of the distinction between life and literature, and what we are really concerned with here are parallels with Dostoevsky in a particular literary work. Yet there is never any sharp distinction between Mayakovsky and the central characters in his poems, and when we find biographical evidence that the poet himself responded to a character or situation in Dostoevsky we may be fairly sure that such a response will be mirrored in the imagined experiences of his characters.

While there are a number of significant parallels with Dostoevsky in several of Mayakovsky's earlier works, the clearest and most specific parallels occur in the poem *About That*. Lily Brik argues that Mayakovsky had a close emotional affinity with Dostoevsky himself, and that this explains the apparent anomaly of a revolutionary poet echoing and even quoting the great conservative novelist. Mayakovsky's admiration of Dostoevsky as a novelist—though not of course as an ideologue—is well established by Lily's own testimony, and, given the sharp contrast between the two men in political outlook and allegiance, it's not surprising that Mayakovsky never emphasized this particular literary preference of his, and that, as a matter of fact, there are only very few references to Dostoevsky in the 13 volumes of his *Collected Works*, all of them routine and casual.

I would suggest that Mayakovsky was drawn to Dostoevsky because of that novelist's intense investigation of a number of characters who are in one way or another in rebellion, not only against society and social requirements, but against the rigid fact of existence itself. The number and variety of suicides that Dostoevsky examines in vivid psychological detail provided material that was congenial to Mayakovsky's own consciousness. Raskolnikov contemplated the deed, and his 'double' Svidrigailov performed it; Kirillov plans his own suicide, and repeatedly explains the theory that drives him to it; Stavrogin is so empty of love that only suicide is left him ('Blame no one', he wrote); the 'Ridiculous Man' plans suicide in his waking moments and carries it out in his dream. All of these characters have reached an extreme of alienation not unlike the condition of the central personage in *The*

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Cloud, The Backbone Flute, Man, and *About That,* and very like the psychological condition of Mayakovsky himself at certain points in his life.

The Poet and *Byt*

When the poem *About That* appeared in the first number of the magazine *Lef*, Mayakovsky's severest critic, N. Chuzhak, wrote a brief and devastating comment on it in which he said:

> Everything in this 'Mystery' is *byt*. Everything is moved by *byt*. 'My' house. 'She,' surrounded by friends and servants. . . . And 'he' listens at the doors, rushes back and forth, genius that he is, from one set of philistines to another, talks with them about art, passionately mocks himself . . . and comes to the conclusion that 'there's no way out' (*devatsya nekuda*).
>
> And really 'there's no way out': the whole free world is enclosed by philistines and their way of life. In 1914 that poet was more perspicacious, and his hero did know a way out. . . .
>
> But still in the end of the poem, we see, 'there is a way out'. That way out is the faith that 'in the future everything will be different, and there will be some kind of marvellous life. . . .'
>
> It seems to me that this is the faith of *despair*. . . . *This is not a way out, but a hopeless situation.*[38]

One can only say to this that even though he disapproved, Chuzhak has correctly understood the poem's deeper meaning; and others on the editorial board of *Lef* shared Chuzhak's unhappiness. In the poem *Man* there is no hope in heaven or on earth for the poet, and earth's future offers no relief from the dominion of the philistines. In *About That* the outlook would seem to have altered for the better in that a happy future is allowed to mankind; yet for the poet in his own lifetime there is still no hope and no 'way out', since the philistine dominates even 'our red-flagged way of life'. The old enemy has conquered again, and the world has grown grey with his breath.

Who exactly is the enemy? At first sight it seems a paradox that a towering ego such as Mayakovsky, an individualist whose sole topic was himself, should have lived constantly with the thought of suicide, with the compulsion, in other words, to destroy the self. In discussing the poem *Man* Jakobson defines the poet's mortal contest with *byt* as an unresolvable opposition to everything that exists outside the self:

> If we should attempt to translate Mayakovsky's mythology into the language of speculative philosophy, the exact equivalent of this enmity [for *byt*] would be the opposition of 'ego', and 'not ego'. It would be impossible to find a more adequate name for the enemy.[39]

[38] *Lef*, No. 2 (1923), pp. 150–51.
[39] R. Jakobson, 'O pokolenii rastrativshem svoikh poetov', p. 15.

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Jakobson also points out that it is only in the poem *About That* that the struggle with *byt* is given directly: in his other works *byt* is usually personified—in *Man*, for instance, as the 'Ruler of All'.

Jakobson's statement is a brilliant insight and certainly points to the essence of Mayakovsky's problem. No doubt the reason *byt* is attacked directly in *About That* (and also, we recall, in *The Fourth International*) is that at the time of writing that poem his spirit was depressed by the immediate evidence that the revolutionary explosions of the century had changed nothing, that the old way of life had settled firmly into its old established ruts, that bureaucrats and policemen still held sway under the 'new' regime, and that the immemorial enemy, just as he had once appropriated the symbols of Christ, now held sway under the aegis of Marx.

But the Soviet philistine is only one form the enemy took: we recall that in *Man* the angels busily concerned with ordering the heavenly realm are a kind of celestial variation of *byt*, they are bodiless philistines. The 'Ordinary Young Man' of the *Tragedy* is still another variation: like Fekla Davydovna's husband he wants to hear no dangerous revolutionary talk, he is attached to his sister, named Sonia, and to material progress—his machine for cutting up chops automatically, and his friend's invention, a trap for bedbugs. Moreover he has a wife, who will soon have a son or a daughter. The 'ordinary young man' is in thrall to objective reality: in order to control it he has surrendered to it; he has accepted Marx's dictum that 'freedom is knowledge of necessity'.

Another shape of the enemy was 'Wilson', the man whose city rests upon a screw and is completely 'electro-dynamo-mechanized'. Still another is Lloyd George, the 'Negus' and those other 'clean' characters in *Mystery Bouffe* whom the flood washes away. The odious 'fat-ones' (*zhirnye*) that appear in *The Cloud*, in the short poem 'That for You!' (*Nate!*) and elsewhere are another variation of the enemy. Obviously many of these 'masks' fit the general concept of the bourgeois. But the angels in *Man* hardly fit into that category, and the Soviet philistines that are castigated in *The Fourth International* and in *About That* are certainly not bourgeois, whatever else they are. Heaven itself in *Man* has its own variety of *byt*, that is to say, a rigid organization with assigned songs to sing (an aria from Rigoletto, for instance), and assigned tasks for each bodiless being to perform. Like the angels, the whores of Montparnasse have their own habits and expectations. The source of all organization is of course God himself who, we recall, 'made the stars light up their fires', who (as we have it in *The Cloud*) created man with imperative sexual needs but never 'fixed it' so that those needs could be absolutely satisfied ('so that he could just kiss and kiss and kiss'). Repeatedly we find the poet rebelling against the fact that sexual 'love' is part of a larger plan not devised by the poet himself and the terms of which he cannot accept. A family, stability, children,

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the home were never part of the bargain entered into by the frantic lover. Maria in *The Cloud* wants to 'get married' with all that implies as to regularity of life and provision for the consequences of sex; Lily in *The Backbone Flute* is already married and has music on her piano (twice used as a symbol of *byt*); the girl on Zhukovsky Street in *Man* whose boudoir he invades has a husband categorized as to place and profession —he is an engineer—who claims his rights: 'Why are you bothering my wife?'; Fekla Davydovna's husband boasts of his daughter, who is 'the spitting image of him'. And even *she* in that poem is caught in the tangles of convention and routine. The free, unfettered happiness of the poem 'I love you', in which the girl simply plays with his heart as with a child's ball, was an illusion. The exercise of sex brings about situations and consequences that fetter the poet. Even the revolution, in the course of propagating and defending itself, has had to organize, define, and regulate life, and it had placed the poet in a confining niche.

We may now be in a better position to answer the question already posed: why was the expansive Mayakovsky self so obsessed with the idea of destroying itself? Precisely because the poet's ego was so demanding, because he could not compromise his existential autonomy, because he could not accept the 'plan' imposed upon him whether by God, by nature, or by the state, the act of suicide may have seemed an ultimate assertion of the self, and the only means to achieve perfect freedom. And there was literary precedent for such an action in the suicide of Kirillov in *The Possessed*, who had to kill himself in order to assert his independence.

But Mayakovsky recovered from the psychological crisis of 1923, and no doubt his work on the poem *About That* was a kind of occupational therapy inasmuch as the poem did objectify and externalize his problem. Soon after the poem's completion he came out of isolation, began once again to see his friends, and plunged into a new kind of agitation and propaganda: commercial poetry. For a few more years the well-organized 'alter ego' whom the poet recognized in Fekla Davydovna's apartment would dominate his life and save him from suicide. Once more the structural unity of his life and all his work strikes us with particular force: doomed to death as he was, he still continued for some years to shout his 'commercials', like the man in *The Cloud* who recommends on the very gallows that we 'drink Van Houten's cocoa'.

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Yugoslav Literature and Politics

Branko Lenski

'IN 1917, in Russia, there were several thousand dynamic, ingenious, leftist-oriented intellectuals who excelled in theoretical polemics. They had a monopoly on the way of thinking, and everyone was afraid of them. In 1918 these leftist-oriented intellectuals held a conference in Petrograd and refused to collaborate with Lenin who was too primitive for them. Lenin was annoyed by this fact for several minutes. At that time Russia was practically ruled by the sailors of its naval forces, a colourful bunch of hoodlums, and the leftist-oriented intellectuals invited a delegation of these sailors to their conference in order to instruct them in the fundamental aspects of things. It was necessary to make clear to the sailors that the absolute determinism of History and its absolute contingency are indeed equivalent. Since both of these are extremes, one is much better off if, instead of murdering in the name of one's certainty concerning the future, one kills in the name of one's uncertainty. . . . The sailors listened politely and remained calm for two hours. Then one of them, whose name happened to be Chaikin, a formidable ape of a man, handsome and ferocious, got up, and without the slightest anger, seized the leading leftist intellectual (who happened to be Andrei Bely, the Russian nominee for the Nobel Prize) by the collar and threw him out. After that Chaikin returned and word by word said the following: "You are all very nice, comrades, and no one is going to harm you, but we are here to make the world revolution and that's serious business. Therefore you shall be given brooms and you are going to sweep the Nevsky Promenade. After you accomplish that task, you will be given some food, so you won't starve. You will also receive white paper and pencils so you can write until the next snow blizzard." That same evening Lenin was informed about what had happened to the leftist intellectuals at their conference. "Hear, hear!" said Lenin. The next day he appeared on the balcony of the Kchessinsky palace, before the crowd assembled beneath, and he told Bukharin who was standing next to him: "You still believe that it is necessary to instruct people in murder." And he shouted to those below: "Take back what has been stolen from you. By every single means at your disposal!"' The character telling the story in Raymond Abellio's novel, *The Eyes of Ezekiel are Open*, published in 1949 in Paris, concludes: 'That's all. And it's still going on.'[1]

IN this passage we can recognize the basic distribution of roles in the conflict, which under other circumstances and at a different time,

[1] Raymond Abellio, *Les Yeux d'Ezéchiel sont ouverts*, (Paris, 1949), pp. 339–340.

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characterized the Yugoslav literary and political scene. Following the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia, through gradual evolution in the 1920s, a number of leftist writers and critics made themselves known through articles published in a number of leftist journals. They seemingly spoke on behalf of the Yugoslav Communist Party and were faithful to the Marxist line in social, political, economic, philosophic and historical thinking as interpreted by Lenin and Stalin. They gradually became very vocal in matters pertaining to problems of art in general and literature in particular. Leaning on a political power in the background, acting as its literary avant-garde, they established methods for dealing with social and literary phenomena that fell short of their approval. They repeated *ad nauseam* such unquestionable principles of Marxist dogma as 'the primacy of the material world which is merely recorded by our minds'. The role of the writer, according to the self-appointed authoritative leftist interpreters of Marxist truths, consisted above all in properly registering the social phenomena of the outer world and reconstructing this world adequately. Talent was less important than the proper historical and social perspective. The writer was responsible for his writings to those he was meant to enlighten. It suffices to consult certain Yugoslav periodicals of the late twenties and the thirties to witness the evolution of leftist phraseology. The seriousness of those who wrote in the leftist-oriented journals is evident. They considered themselves the sole guardians of truth, in tune with the triumphant march of history. For them literature and the revolution were closely allied—revolution the supreme master, literature the faithful servant. Leftist critics contributing to magazines like *Kritika*, *Literatura*, *Nova Literatura*, *Savremena Stvarnost* and *Stozher*, decided what forms commitment should take. Theirs were the anointed minds capable of reflecting objective reality, the only ones to see clearly through the maze of economic relationships. Writing creatively was not so much their trade. They chose rather to instruct others on how to do what they themselves had not bothered to do or did not know how to do too well. They easily put down the uncommitted and the reactionary writers by calling them formalists, bourgeois lackeys or decadents. Writers committed to the progressive forces in Yugoslav society, but not quite in the manner the important leftist diagnosticians proposed, were at first gently reprimanded and given comradely advice on what to do in order to satisfy their requirements. The hope was that the temporarily misguided writers could be steered onto the right path before sinking into the deadly waters of revisionism.

In the earliest skirmishes, first the surrealists were crushed. Torn by their own diverse loyalties and contradictions, groping after their own flamboyant synthesis of revolution and poetry, addicted to a rather cosmic view of the brotherhood of men, the surrealists could not concretely bridge the gap that separated them from the historic and political realities of the moment. Often surpassing everyone else in their fervent

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criticism of bourgeois-capitalistic society, they ultimately proved a nuisance to their leftist critics, more firmly planted in reality, who felt obliged to denounce them. The surrealist movement in Yugoslavia was mainly a Serbian phenomenon. It followed closely the movement's progress in France and was particularly sensitive to the separation between Breton and Aragon. Dealt blows by disunity in their own ranks and attacked by the hard party core of future socialist realists, the Yugoslav surrealists ceased to function as a movement by the end of 1932. After their dissolution, some adhered to the extreme Left, others joined the group of independent leftist intellectuals, the future *pechatovci*.

In 1933 we are still at the stage of the early skirmishes even though the area of conflict was expanding. That year saw the publication of Krsto Hegedushich's book *Scenes from the Podrava Region* (*Podravski motivi*) containing 34 drawings by the artist and a 20-page introduction by Miroslav Krlezha. By that time Krlezha had already published his travelogue *Journey to Russia*, his famous *The Glembays Prose and Drama Cycle*, his collections of short stories *The Croatian God Mars* and *One Thousand and One Deaths*, his novel *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* and numerous essays. He had established himself as the foremost Yugoslav writer, a brilliant stylist, a man of exuberant temperament, astounding erudition—one of the most powerful social critics in twentieth century literature. He was highly esteemed by the communist left as an important voice in socially committed literature, a writer who steadily denounced the bourgeois mentality, the so-called 'top-hatted civilization', the culture of the '*homo cilindriacus*' and the shark mentality of capitalism. Here was a man of great talent, a writer guided by Marxist principles, faithful to the spirit of historical and dialectical materialism. Krlezha's sway over the minds of several generations of young and not so young literati in Yugoslavia between the two world wars was as overwhelming as Gide's influence on the French at the same time. Krlezha was sensitive to ultra-leftist attacks against surrealism as well as to numerous leftist essays about the social function of literature, the sociological method in literature, the various relationships between literature and economic factors in society, the role of proletarian literature, the right and the wrong path in social commitment. In his introduction to Hegedushich's *Scenes from the Podrava Region* Krlezha took a stand in order to manifest his own position in the critical skirmishes of the early 1930s. He voiced basic convictions about the function of literature in society to which he has remained faithful ever since. Literature according to him originates from the clash between the writer and society, between the writer's existence and the essences generated by society (classes, ways of thinking, fashions, beliefs, regulations, etc.). The writer negates these essences which negate him and through negating them he liberates his own essence and this essence supported by talent becomes literature. Thus the writer and society are inextricably bound together. From their mutual negation an affirmative

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synthesis is born: literature. The writer affirms through negation in the name of what is best in him, his essence. Of course, he has an obligation to society. Of course, he should be committed to the left. But he must first of all be committed to himself. Any group negating in the name of a social imperative the imperative of the writer to be himself is a group negating man's totality. Literature cannot be willed, ordered by rational decrees from outside, nor from inside. It emerges from the totality of being like a fever. Krlezha rejects both rightist and leftist mystifications: art for art's sake and cheap pragmatism. He pleads in glowing terms for the affirmation of talent over mediocrity, intensity over passivity, individualism over conformity.

The 20 pages of the introduction to *Scenes from the Podrava Region* set the ground for future skirmishes soon to escalate into major battles—not only literary but historical and political. Krlezha had clearly defined the boundaries of the battlefield. To the primacy of the revolution he opposed the primacy of the individual within the revolution and for the revolution. Endless ink would flow, numerous talents would be crushed before a more general consensus about the proper balance could be agreed upon. From now on through words or through significant refusals to speak Krlezha was the leading figure in Yugoslav literary and social controversies: others would merely react for or against him. Like a masterful stage director in charge of every aspect of a show he would design the sets and manoeuvre the sound effects. Since his reputation as a progressive leftist writer was as indisputable as his talent, he could not be as easily disposed of as the surrealists. The more politically oriented Left had no interest in alienating Krlezha who recruited through his writings many future fighters for the cause. Shortly after *Scenes from the Podrava Region* however, someone calling himself A.B.C. published an article in the magazine *Kultura* entitled 'Quo vadis Krlezha?'[2] which inaugurated the leftist attack against Krlezha and his collaborators. Krlezha was attacked by critics like Prica, Galogazha, Milovan Djilas and the Yugoslav Zhdanov, Radovan Zogovich—and Tito himself in an article in the magazine *Proleter* entitled 'Trotskyism and its Helpers'[3] wondered what the Trotskyists in Yugoslavia might do next. Krlezha answered all of them in December 1939 with a 150 page article written with the urgency of Zola's *J'accuse*—his treatise *The Dialectical Anti-Barbarus*[4] published in the magazine *Pechat* he had founded earlier that year.[5]

[2] A.B.C., 'Quo vadis Krlezha?', *Kultura*, 4 (1933), pp. 305–319.

[3] T., 'Trockizam i njegovi pomagachi', *Proleter*, 1 (May 1939), pp. 5–6.

[4] Miroslav Krlezha, 'Dijalektichki antibarbarus,' *Pechat*, 8–9 (1939), pp. 73–232.

[5] On the editorial board of *Pechat* (a spiritual offspring of the short-lived magazine *Danas*) were the artist Krsto Hegedushich and the surrealist champion Marko Ristich, one of Yugoslavia's most prominent literary critics. Vasa Bogdanov, Oskar Davicho and Zvonimir Richtmann, in addition to Krlezha and Ristich, were among its most controversial contributors. The association of Krlezha with the surrealist Ristich was viewed with particular displeasure by the future Yugoslav Zhdanovites. It gave them an easy excuse for opening fire against the *pechatovci* using guns that had lain

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In the preface to *Scenes from the Podrava Region* Krlezha had defined his artistic credo. In *The Dialectical Anti-Barbarus* he denounced those literati and theoreticians on the far Left who according to him were attempting to take art and literature back to the era of the cave man. He was not so much concerned with what they were saying as with how they were saying it. He analyzed their methods of slander, their apriorism, their deafness to arguments different from their own, their blindness toward the totality of man. He dissected the functioning of their malevolent annihilating minds that shunned nothing in order to achieve their goals. With the publication of *The Dialectical Anti-Barbarus* the schism on the Left was irreparable. Voices from the highest echelons of the Party spoke against the heretic spirit of *pechatovshtina*: among them Djilas, Kardelj and once again Tito himself in a second article in the magazine *Proleter* entitled ' For the Purity and the Bolshevization of the Party '.[6] On the eve of gathering storms, there was no place for heretic councils. Literature had no right to obstruct politics, create confusion in the minds of the workers, compromise revolution. After numerous ' Bolshevist ' critics had emphasized the barbarism of Krlezha's anti-barbarism the first and only number of a literary magazine called *Knjizhevne sveske* was published in Zagreb in 1940 containing 13 articles by *anti-pechat* critics. The *Knjizhevne sveske* gave a definite diagnosis of *pechatovshtina*. Krlezha was given an ultimatum: either to admit openly heresy or to disengage himself from his collaborators and straighten up. Krlezha, in what Stanko Lasich in his book *The Conflict on the Literary Left 1928–1952* [7] considers to be Krlezha's most courageous act, declared complete solidarity with his friends, assuming sole responsibility for his views. He asserted his continuing belief in the necessity of fighting stupidity, short-sightedness and primitivism, regardless of source and side. However, after April 1940 the magazine *Pechat* ceased publication. Some voices went on defending *pechatovshtina*, many more with ever greater conviction spoke against it. The war against the fascist invaders was close. Under the circumstances Krlezha chose the road of silence, retreat—and after the fascist invasion of Yugoslavia—hiding.

In a manner of speaking Krlezha's silence lasted for a full 13 years. 1948 proved Krlezha right. Wasn't Tito's heresy towards Stalin a replica of Krlezha's earlier heresy toward Tito—under different circumstances of course and through different media? In 1948, as Lasich suggests, ' the Yugoslav communist movement began ridding itself of its theological structure, but wasn't ready yet for the human structure '.[8] The

silent since the liquidation of surrealism. How could Krlezha transgress to the point of choosing friends from such a discredited source? Could it be outright treason against the proletarian cause? Hadn't Ristich, among other faults, committed the sin of insinuating at one time that the heroic war waged by the Spanish people against fascism was no more than the release of a collective subconscious?

[6] T., ' Za chistochu i boljshevizaciju partije,' *Proleter*, 3–4 (1940), pp. 5–9.

[7] Stanko Lasich, *Sukob na knjizhevnoj ljevici 1928–1952*, (Zagreb, 1970).

[8] Lasich, op. cit. p. 273.

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need for vigilance was greater than ever, both toward the Left and the Right. In 1949, at the Second Congress of Yugoslav Writers in Zagreb, both Shegedin and Krlezha paid lip service to the indisputable necessity of a writer's leftist commitment but asserted in the same breath the right and obligation of the writer to be himself. Krlezha was faithful to his essential beliefs expressed earlier but there was some caution in the way in which he stated them. He waited till the next Congress of Yugoslav Writers to announce the total bankruptcy of socialist realism and proclaim his own vision of a more humane synthesis between literature and revolution. 1952 in Ljubljana represents Krlezha's apotheosis. Never again would he be so totally in accord with the spirit of the times in his country. Everything proved him right: the past, the present, and as he spoke, it could be gathered that the future too could not fail to be on his side. His was the voice of time itself! He eulogized his country formed after centuries of occupation, emphasized its isolation since 1948. He called the task confronting Yugoslav writers a difficult one, for the situation was difficult as it had been in the past when century after century in a harrowing continuum, political storms of the worst kind had interfered with a life propitious for artistic creation. No Western literature evolving unperturbedly under traditional roofs could have surmounted such difficulties, stated Krlezha.

He brilliantly evoked the essential features of the debates that had been going on in Yugoslavia since 1932 concerning the dilemma of literature in regard to what aspects of reality it should in preference focus upon, namely: should it be realistic or formalistic? Should it be a chronicle of aggressions, brutalities, crematoriums, genocides, a chronicle of misery, wars, revolutions and concrete dangers surrounding Yugoslavia—or should it be isolated from reality by some sort of art for art's sake narcosis? Should it actively participate in the battle or should it take refuge in indifference? Should it be on the side of the humiliated and the suffering or should it cast anchor in some neutral territory?

The answer Krlezha gave to this portentous dilemma is the one he gave earlier in the introduction to *Scenes from the Podrava Region* and *The Dialectical Anti-Barbarus*—only heightened by the sense of personal victory and by the recent historical events that had made Krlezha's ideas only more worthy of acclamation. After denouncing both rightist and leftist mystifications in literature, showing Zhdanovism to be the most odious and perverse interference of state-legislated mediocrity in the domain of artistic expression, he called on Yugoslav writers to defend the independent way of socialism that has been so dearly paid for in the Yugoslav experience. It is necessary, said he, to show the rest of the world that Yugoslavs have always fought for the freedom of literary expression, for a simultaneity of styles, for the principle of the free expression of ideas, faithful to their own independent moral and political convictions. Yugoslav literature must strive toward the creation of an authentic literary medium, free from imitation of foreign models and free from excessive regionalism. When writers come who with

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their talent, their knowledge and their experience will know how to reflect subjectively the concrete aspirations of the Yugoslav leftist reality, such an autonomous literature will be born, assured Krlezha in the conclusion of his Ljubljana speech.[9]

With Ljubljana a long chapter in Krlezha's life as well as in the literary and political life of Yugoslavia was closed. Krlezha could retire now to illustrate by example what he had meant by 'creation of an autonomous literature, an autonomous art and an autonomous culture'. He could among numerous other literary accomplishments publish the third volume of his novel *The Banquet in Blithuania*, start working on his historical *roman fleuve*, *The Banners*, supervise, annotate and guide toward completion numerous volumes of the Yugoslav Encyclopedia as its Editor in Chief and Director of the Lexicographic Institute in Zagreb. He had fought so many battles in the course of his life that he had earned the right to rest, work in peace, while still continuously disseminating culture, enlightening, recreating history through every means of expression at his disposal. Even so he once more consented to involve himself directly in a conflict that had both literary and political implications, by signing the 15 March 1967 *Declaration Concerning the Name and the Position of the Croatian Literary Language*.[10]

During his long career Krlezha has rebelled against the military and social establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, against the despotism of the old Yugoslav monarchy, against fascism and against the communist bureaucracy of the Stalinist era. After Yugoslavia's breach with the Cominform in 1948, he saw a number of the ideals for which he had fought as a young man implemented in socialism. But the continuous need for the battle against human stupidity remained, regardless of the label under which it performs at a given time its seemingly eternal functions. In 1969 in Predrag Matvejevich's *Conversations with Krlezha*, paraphrasing Maupassant who once wrote 'How beautiful was the Republic under the Empire', Krlezha said: 'How beautiful was socialism under capitalism', reminding us how easy and comfortable it is to be a socialist under capitalism when 'all the blame can be laid conveniently on a capitalistic system. But who is to be blamed under socialism where men also suffer from toothache, illegitimate children are born and where in a general way people are also more or less petty,

[9] Miroslav Krlezha, 'Govor izrechen 5.X.1952. na Trechem kongresu knjizhevnika Jugoslavije u Ljubljani', *Republika*, 10–11 (1952).

[10] 'Deklaracija o polozhaju i nazivu Hrvatskog knjizhevnog jezika', *Telegram*, 359 (17 March 1967).

The Declaration emphasizes the plurality of the Yugoslav literary languages. It makes it clear that a Yugoslav writer writes in Serbian or in Croatian (or of course in Slovenian or in Macedonian) and by no means in Serbo-Croatian. Krlezha summed it all up when in an interview with the Sarajevo magazine *Svijet* (extracts from which can be found in 'Kvadratura lingvistichkog kruga', *Vechernji list* (4 February 1971)) he said: 'Ever since I began writing I have written in Croatian, just as all Serbian writers write in Serbian.'

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nervous, mean, ailing and poorly paid, trying to knife one another in every walk of life? ' [11]

In *Conversations with Krlezha*, Krlezha in answering Matvejevich's questions points to the recurring motives, the deep coherences in his life and work. He sums up some old statements and expresses some new ideas about certain literary and political trends and fashions. Asked what he thought about the recent university disorders, Krlezha voiced the sympathy of an old professional for the often naive student rebellions in the East and in the West in so far as they are an expression of the vital force of youth. But he who has lived through monarchism, fascism, communism and socialism knows the other side of the coin only too well. ' Those rebellious leftist youngsters ', said he in 1969, ' who are being heard today in the cities of Western Europe believe that reality can be stepped over and that as in a beautiful dream they can overnight free themselves of their earthly shadow. They think they are more intelligent than we are, as if we too have not been persuaded in our dreams that centuries can be leaped over. The difference between us and them consists only in that we have been what they are today and the same thing will happen to them that has happened to us—they will live to see their ideals come true.' [12]

Close to the end of his victorious road, Krlezha offers the compassionate smile of a man who knows the true measure of victories. He has seen through the affirmation of the liberal leftist tendency in Yugoslav socialism against orthodox leftism which was dealt a serious blow by the breach with Stalin in 1948 but which still remained strong for a good number of years and is by no means dead today. The former *anti-pechatovci*, if not killed by the fascists [13] or fallen in the war, came to the leading positions in Yugoslavia in 1945. What they once had disseminated for a few literati in literary magazines they thought they could now endlessly shout from every balcony. Only three years after the end of war, despite the shock of the breach with Stalin, the realization that they might no longer be in tune with the structures they assumed to interpret, was impossible to accept. Without knowing it, they were undergoing a rapid process of petrification. They were separating themselves from the masses in whose name they were speaking and writing. They were growing old and, with age, after so many fatigues and difficulties endured in the past, they succumbed (with noble exceptions) to the need of small comforts, turning into the *new class* described in 1956 by their renegade Milovan Djilas in the following terms:

11 Predrag Matvejevich, *Razgovori s Miroslavom Krlezhom*, (Zagreb, 1969), pp. 54–55.

12 Matvejevich, op. cit. p. 58.

13 There had been early victims. In 1941, one of the staunchest critics of *pechatovshtina*, Ognjen Prica, along with Otokar Kershovani, was shot by the fascists. Paradoxically, shot in the same group was the outstanding *pechatovac* Zvonimir Richtmann. The fascists made no distinction between the various brands of leftism: for them they were all the same.

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> The wonderful human characteristics of an isolated movement are slowly transformed into the intolerant and Pharisaical morals of a privileged caste. Thus, politicking and servility replace the former straightforwardness of the revolution. Where the former heroes who were ready to sacrifice everything, including life, for others and for an idea, for the good of the people, have not been killed or pushed aside, they become self-centred cowards without ideas or comrades, willing to renounce everything—honour, name, truth and morals—in order to keep their place in the ruling class and the hierarchical circle. The world has seen few heroes as ready to sacrifice and suffer as the communists were on the eve of and during the revolution. It has probably never seen such characterless wretches and stupid defenders of arid formulae as they became after attaining power. Wonderful human features were the condition for creating and attracting power for the movement; exclusive caste spirit and complete lack of ethical principles and virtues have become conditions for the power and maintenance of the movement. Honour, sincerity, sacrifice, and love of the truth were once things that could be understood for their own sakes; now, deliberate lies, sycophancy, slander, deception, and provocation gradually become the inevitable attendants of the dark, intolerant, and all-inclusive might of the new class, and even affect relations between the members of the class.[14]

Djilas was in jail in the Sremska Mitrovica prison near Belgrade between 1933 and 1936 during the Yugoslav Monarchy. He was jailed again and sent to the same prison 20 years later in Tito's Yugoslavia and was in jail between December 1956 and January 1961 and then again between April 1962 and December 1966. Before his first imprisonment in 1956 Djilas had completed and sent to foreign publishers the manuscript of *The New Class* and the novel *Land Without Justice*, which along with Krlezha's *The Return of Philip Latinovicz*, Andrich's *The Bridge on the Drina* (*Na Drini chuprija*) and *Bosnian Chronicle* (*Travnichka Hronika*), Bulatovich's *The Red Cock Flies to Heaven* and Matko Peich's *Wanderings* (*Skitnje*), ranks among the masterpieces of contemporary Yugoslav literature.[15]

[14] Milovan Djilas, *The New Class* (New York, 1957), pp. 155–156.

Djilas, who in 1937 wrote against surrealism, who in 1940 contributed to *Knjizhevne sveske* his *anti-pechat* article 'From Misunderstanding to Revisionism,' who at the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party in 1948 spoke against those who misinterpreted Marxist orthodoxy, underwent a colossal metamorphosis. In *Conversations with Stalin* (1962) he relates the stages of his growing doubts and gradual disappointments in the course of his three meetings with Stalin: from the time when in 1944 he travelled to Moscow, as one goes to Mecca, to his disillusioned return from his third visit with Stalin in 1948. In *The Unperfect Society : Beyond the New Class* (1969) Djilas traces the evolution of his heresy from his first disagreements with his friends in the highest party echelons to his final decision to recant. In *The Leper*, the title story of his collection of tales, he dramatizes his conflict with Tito and his gradual descent into the depths of heresy.

[15] The objection may be raised 'and what about Crnjanski, Davicho, Marinkovich' or any other Yugoslav writer not mentioned here. The above selection is my personal choice after many years of close contact with Yugoslav writers and their works.

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If Krlezha and Tito achieved their full stature by way of constant victorious ascent, Djilas realized his total potential only through his own, wilfully chosen descent into hell. He could have been the darling of the 'new class', the leading dialectician of the regime. Instead he chose to be 'the leper', to take upon himself and to confess the total guilt of communist praxis since 1917. Once he saw the crack in the mirror and after seeing it, once he decided beyond doubt that he must trust his own sight over that of those around him, he shouted his truth to the world—that truth which as Niels Nielsen in Krlezha's novel *Banquet in Blithuania* puts it 'is everything you feel that should be better kept to yourself, better not pronounced, what may harm us, because spoken out it certainly disagrees with our petty, egotistical, momentary interest. That's what truth is. The truth is when you feel something should be said, what in your own best interest it would be wiser and more polite to hush. Is there any benefit in expressing truths? No, there isn't. Because for centuries prison warrants have been issued against truth.' [16]

Besides, for whom should one write the truth? For the benefit of the 'new class'? Did the hypocrites after the performance of Molière's *The Hypocrite* (*Tartuffe*) feel any less at ease? Are the members of the 'new class' likely to sleep any less well because of Djilas' *The New Class*? For whom should truth be written then? For the proletarian? For the dispossessed? For him in whose name so much blood has been shed, so much ink spilt, so many intellectual quarrels indulged in?

In the concluding chapter of *The Conflict on the Literary Left 1928–1952*, Stanko Lasich, discussing the paradox of the dispossessed, points to the double antinomy in the relationship between the revolution and literature. 'The interior antinomy shows', says Lasich, 'that the artist always betrays the revolution since he betrays and negates that inevitable revolutionary betrayal of the totality of man.' [17] The exterior antinomy according to Lasich consists in the artist's betrayal of the man who has nothing, because he serves him only indirectly, seeing him as an abstract and future man and not as someone living here and now in a concrete alienated society. The disturbing question arises then: Since the dispossessed cannot *understand* them, aren't all these battles in the name of more artistic freedom, more totality, more humanism, empty oratory without any roots in reality? Aren't they futile verbal acrobatics?

In his study Lasich brings us to the year 1952, the moment when with Krlezha's flamboyant Ljubljana speech the hegemonistic and absolutistic revolutionary structure had been historically and dialectically exposed, like a corpse dissected in an anatomy class. At that salutory impasse of the revolution conceived as an absolute, intimates Lasich towards the end of his book, a vague premonition of the presence of an artistic conscience was born, a turn from an all-enclosing essence

[16] Miroslav Krlezha, *Banket u Blitvi* (Zagreb, 1938), p. 104.
[17] Lasich, op. cit. p. 288.

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towards existential authenticity with its own essence. The man who embodies this metamorphosis in the struggle on the Left in Yugoslavia is the revolutionary turned artist, Milovan Djilas, who chose to write about the truth, not for the benefit of the 'new class' or 'the dispossessed' but as so many great rebels before him had done, for himself and for everyone.

Compared to Krlezha, Djilas is no more than a belated *pechatovac*. But Djilas' *pechatovshtina* is unique. In relation to Stalin, Tito was a *pechatovac*. Djilas is a double *pechatovac*: against Stalin and against Tito. Krlezha was right from the beginning, and Tito was right against Stalin. Djilas is not right. He is guilty. Like Clamence in Camus' novel *The Fall*, he at one point begins to confess his guilt so that others may identify with him, recognize themselves in him, then slowly speak in their turn. Before the fall they were all, including Djilas, innocent, secure in their villas, hunting lodges, swimming pools and grandstands. Now suddenly they all seemed guilty.

In October 1968 Djilas, who has never lost his personal admiration for Tito, came to the United States for a two-month visit before returning to Yugoslavia. He was awarded the Freedom Award of Freedom House. It is inessential whether today he calls himself a communist humanist or a socialist humanist, a socialist or a democrat. He is above all a writer whose *The New Class* is a standard textbook in the United States for courses in political science, yet one whose potentially most appreciative audience, the Yugoslavs, has not yet been given the right to discover him.[18] In 1961 Djilas had not published enough, was not well enough known as a writer, to be a nominee for the Nobel Prize for Literature. So the choice, as far as Yugoslavia was concerned, was between Krlezha and Andrich. For the jury to have given the award to the teller of tales, the chronicler, the sedate traditionalist Andrich can be justified and seems in retrospect even logical. Part of Andrich's greatness, abstracting his perfect mastery of the craft, lies in the astounding peace he was able to find amidst turmoil, the degree of detachment from subject matter he was able to achieve, while so much was happening around him. Yugoslavia seen through Andrich's Bosnia comes closer to the traditional representation of that country by a Westerner reared on Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* than Krlezha's unpredictable universe.

Krlezha, born in 1893, Andrich, born in 1892, and Tito, born in 1892, belong to the old generation of remarkable Southern Slavs who have contributed so much to the greatness of their country. Djilas, born in 1911, belongs to the older middle generation; he was a young man of 30 at the outbreak of the war, 45 when he finished writing *The New*

18 Djilas' writings since the articles published in the Belgrade communist newspaper *Borba* between October 1953 and January 1954 (gathered in *Anatomy of a Moral*, New York, 1959) are unknown in Yugoslavia. Djilas is today an international writer and on account of the efforts of his New York publisher William Jovanovich (himself of Montenegrin parentage) almost an American writer.

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Class. Matko Peich, the author of *The Wanderings*, born in 1923, belongs to the younger middle generation. *The Wanderings*, written in 1952 and published in 1967, stands apart from anything else written in Yugoslav literatures. On the surface it is a lazy journey through Slavonia but through the depiction of layer after layer of Slavonian soil and subsoil with its plants, animals and people, it turns into a throbbing song of life. Oblivious of revolution, Peich is concerned with pure elements. The only storms he sees are made of fire, water, air and earth. Peich need not talk about concentration camps. He suggests them perhaps as he writes about the slow agony in the fields of hundreds of thousands of crabs whose nerves, from their antennas to their tails, have been shattered as the result of an earthquake. Miodrag Bulatovich, born in 1930, belongs to the older young generation of modern Yugoslav writers. He was only 11 when the war broke out and 16 when he began wandering across a land in ruins. He crowed like a cock at the 1959 Frankfurt book fair to bring the attention of foreign publishers to his masterpiece *The Red Cock Flies to Heaven*, translated subsequently into 14 languages. In his later sensational novels geared primarily for export, *The Hero on a Donkey's Back* and *The War was Better*, Bulatovich spoofs the revolution with all its leftish idols. He closely links revolution to pornography, portraying it in Breughelian and Goyaesque colours and shapes as a vast sexual release. Not even Lenin is spared from Bulatovich's satire. Like so many other consecrated lights in the European panopticum, he is exposed on the balcony of the contemporary political and historical brothel, bathed in the red light of prostitution.

After 1952 socialist realism in Yugoslavia was replaced by what came to be termed socialist aestheticism. Party control over literature was gradually withering away, as the general trend in the country was towards an ever greater degree of self-government. After Yugoslavia set the tone, criticism of socialist realism spread first to Poland and years later to Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Hungary. There has also been evidence of the influence of the Yugoslav example on the intellectual Left in the West.[19]

[19] According to Sveta Lukich in *Savremena Jugoslavenska literatura* (Belgrade, 1968), even though the fighters for greater freedom of artistic expression have won significant battles since the thaw in 1952, the conquered territory remains considerably restricted. Lukich objects to the reluctance of Yugoslav writers to delve into the more delicate aspects of contemporary Yugoslav reality. Lukich reaches the conclusion that Yugoslav literature, with the exception of a few peaks, remains mediocre when viewed in a vast perspective for it only rarely transcends its national borders, its most immediate field of observation. But how many literatures would pass the test under such a grading key? When viewing Yugoslav literature as a whole today, particularly when one looks at it from a distance, one should consider the peaks alone and in doing so conclude in favour of the exceptional quality and role in history of modern Yugoslav literature. One must not forget that in modern Yugoslavia talent has had to be coupled with exceptional strength, the capacity to endure enormous difficulties and strife in order to survive. The country has been mutilating and liquidating

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Stepping into the foreground today are young writers to whom the battles fought by the old and the older middle generation during the times of King Alexander, Hitler and Stalin seem distant and unreal. They are perfect strangers to those battles and controversies. The old writers, witnesses to heroic times of strife and war, are still alive, reminiscing about those days, relating their experiences and observations, viewing the new ferments with the all-knowingness of veterans. They deserve our respect, for their dedication to work has been total and many were moved by the fire of ideas that are sorely missing among those who are coming to replace them. They were romantics who took their commitment to the Idea and the Ideal (whether the good or the bad one) very seriously. They exhausted themselves in an effort to reach an impossible synthesis. In their seriousness they were like children playing with the fire stolen from the Gods. The early optimism of the young Yugoslav communists who believed so fervently in a better future for all is but one example of such touching dedication to the Idea. Anything that revealed doubt, gloom, self-indulgence, vice, had to be banished. The empire-builders of the future could not tolerate human weaknesses. They had to watch over literature carefully to prevent decadence, pornography and middle-class mentality from obstructing their grand designs. They were ascetic priests in a temple that has been destroyed in the meantime and on whose ruins a Bulatovich promenades his clowns who make obscene grimaces. A Samuel Beckett was not possible under a system that held a steady watch over the moral fibre of its readers. But the party was waiting for a Godot who did not come and in the process it was growing old. Bulatovich in his play *Godot has Arrived* made Godot come in the shape of a miller, face white with flour—a clown and a dispenser of earthly nourishment. Gradually the slogan: ' We have long enough built socialism—the time has come to enjoy it ' became popular. Death alone was the party's greatest enemy. Lenin, embalmed in his mausoleum like a Hollywood star seems still alive. That Stalin could have died seemed to many unbelievable. Djilas in *The New Class* reminded the Monolithists of their mortality. They would have to accept their own transformation into other substances and face up late in life to the fact that other ways than those they had judged to be the only ones can also be trod upon and are not necessarily all so bad.

In the light of the results that have been achieved through strife and controversy, each of them, those who had the good parts (like Krlezha and Djilas) and those who played the villains for a while (like

numerous talents. In order to stay alive writers have often had to anticipate history. They have often had to *be* history and that's why even beneath its peaks Yugoslav literature is not a mediocre one. For history too can be literature and those who have survived it are artists in their own right. Recorded or unrecorded, thousands of survivors of fascism and communism are folksingers who can tell stories that are literature of the sort that escapes all formal criteria that traditionally define it.

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Zogovich),[20] deserves praise. In the theatre of life light and shadow forever intermingle. In *Conversations with Stalin* Djilas says of Stalin that ' if we assume the viewpoint of humanity and freedom, history does not know a despot as brutal and as cynical as Stalin was. He was methodical, all-embracing, and total as a criminal. He was one of those rare terrible dogmatists capable of destroying nine tenths of the human race to " make happy " the one tenth.' But Djilas also says that ' if we wish to determine what Stalin really meant in the history of communism, then he must for the present be regarded as being, next to Lenin, the most grandiose figure . . . Viewed from the standpoint of success and political adroitness, Stalin is hardly surpassed by any statesman of his time.' [21]

' The eyes of Ezekiel are inhabited by light and haunted by shadows ' says Abellio in the motto of *The Eyes of Ezekiel are Open.*

Since 1949 when *The Eyes of Ezekiel are Open* was published, changes have taken place which force a new meaning upon the passage taken as our point of departure. Due to certain achievements in the early and middle fifties the Chaikins in Yugoslavia and some other countries in Eastern Europe are no longer so freely able to seize the Belys by the collars, stick brooms into their hands and have them sweep promenades. And the miniature Lenins of today are likely to think twice before giving their permission to Chaikins to go ahead. The long struggle of Krlezha and his *pechatovci* against the local Chaikins, Tito's *no* in the face of Stalin and the long solitary striving of Milovan Djilas are all part in different degrees and zones of influence of a larger, universal Manichean struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. Yugoslavia's contribution in this struggle for the humanization of the ape is not a small one. The young writers stepping today into that acquired territory owe their respect to their elders who have often had to tread on ground that many today would consider impassable.

[20] According to Lasich, Zogovich's book *In the Arena* (*No Poprishtu*) published in 1947, is one of the most important books in the world for the study of the problems of party involvement in literature—while Zogovich's speech at the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1948 stands as a model of its kind: the speech of a man who looks without seeing and moreover, who refuses to see.

[21] Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, (New York, 1962), p. 190.

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The Future in Soviet Science Fiction

Cyril Bryner

MARXISM-LENINISM as a future-oriented philosophy invites speculation on what destiny holds for us. The set limit to this speculation is a complete, world-wide communist society. Up to such a time, predictions are controlled by a rigid ideology. Theoretically at least, the imagination is given free play beyond this limit, a limit beyond which, however, no communist ideologist has been inclined to venture though the imperative to do so grows increasingly stronger.

Because science fiction could claim certain liberties appropriate to fiction but denied to philosophy, this form of writing became particularly suitable for projecting a Marxist-Leninist image of the future. Orthodoxy could be maintained together with literary licence. The writer of science fiction could picture the details of the future more freely than could the ideologist or politician without being accused of utopianism or vulgarization. Thus he has an invitation to pre-empt the roles of the philosopher and political scientist.

The twenties might be described as the primitive period of Soviet science fiction with no writers devoting themselves entirely to this genre. Points of view were more speculative and varied than in later periods, and they could be regarded as Marxist-Leninist only in a limited degree though written by men who supported or adhered to communism. In this period there was wilder speculation about the future, since there was a prevailing belief that Utopia was close at hand, and imagination had not yet been made cautious by Stalinism. Ideological errors could be forgiven for lack of experience and presence of good will. Once the government tightened its control of literature, Mayakovsky and Tolstoy in their few ventures into what could be called science fiction could be forgiven almost everything because of the eminence of their positions, while such writers as Bogdanov, who had quarrelled with Lenin, could be forgiven hardly anything.

As a whole, the writers of this period were ready to accept the nearness of Utopia together with the possibility of a cataclysmic interruption or end, entirely unacceptable to later writers. They were ready also to accept with less reservation than their successors the clichés of world science fiction—the war of the worlds and mad scientists, together with an eroticism, or at least speculation on what sexual relations could come to, which were forbidden to later Soviet science fiction.

A true Soviet science fiction evolved separately from the diversity and experimentation of the twenties. Its history was analogous to that of science fiction in the West, where much had been written which could

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have been called science fiction but which was not recognized as a separate literary genre until Gernsback began editing magazines devoted to it. In the Soviet Union, science fiction was recognized in the thirties as a special medium. A group of writers developed who could be described primarily as science fiction writers and who at the same time closely identified themselves with the official ideology. This group, most of whom began writing in the thirties or late twenties and ceased writing in the forties, includes Alexander Belyayev, Sergei Belyayev, Grigori Adamov, Yuri Dolgushin, Vivian Itin, Y. Okunev and Ya. Larri. Of these, Alexander Belyayev is recognized as the founder of a truly Soviet science fiction.

Alexander Belyayev (1884–1942), an invalid jurist, wrote about a world of scientific gadgetry and adventure which had little to do with a coherent picture of the future. Usually his world is an arena for a conflict between Soviet and Western scientists over some marvellous invention which the Soviets will use for humanitarian purposes and the West wishes to use for control or debasement of the world.

A number of authors who began their careers in the Stalin period and continued writing in the Khrushchevian era became part of a newer science fiction. They retained many features of the old while adding more depth and variety. Among these are Vladimir Nemtsov, Ivan Yefremov, Genadi Gor, Lazar Lagin and Sergei Rozval. Yefremov, with the publication of *Tumanost Andromedy* (1958) (English trans. *Andromeda*), the only really extensive attempt to create a post-Soviet Utopia, established himself as dean of Soviet science fiction to this day, and the model for science fiction writers to follow.

A third generation of science fiction writers rose up in the Khrushchev era, and still dominate the field. The most outstanding in this group are the Strugatsky brothers, Arkadi and Boris, one an astronomer and the other a linguist specializing in Japanese. Much better writers than Yefremov, they are also the centre of most of the disputes about Soviet science fiction, because unlike Yefremov, who is a model of conformity, they make controversial interpretations of the dialectic process.

THROUGHOUT its history, Soviet science fiction has been unable to rid itself entirely of the old world. The political police, an embarrassment to writers of the Stalin era, remains a presence in subsequent periods. As a consequence we have numerous spy stories within the genre—though detective stories generally have been discouraged. It is frequently assumed that, together with the Soviet political order, the police will be with us for a long time. Adamov's *The Banished Lord* says of its KGB hero, Major Komarov, 'Who doesn't love him?' But no other writer is that adoring. Usually the policeman is blended into the bureaucracy, which unobtrusively backs up the scientists. In Sever Gansovsky's short story, *Contact*,[1] we have a picture of the sympathetic

[1] *Soprikosnovoniye*, in *Shest geniyev* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 131–65.

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local 'good cop' beloved by Western fiction. Quite naturally, the unobtrusive policeman of official literature becomes the obtrusive policeman in dissent literature. For Zamyatin, Bulgakov, Sinyavsky, Daniel and others, it is taken for granted that the future will be dominated by policemen.

The director in the Strugatsky brothers' *Distant Rainbow* comes close to being a dictator and is regarded with complete sympathy. With some irony he explains that he must 'judge, punish and distribute blessings'. Now he understands 'the hard life of kings, emperors and dictators'. Vsevolod Revich's *A Week of Attack* [2] sympathizes with a God creating the world in seven days, while overburdened with details and the ineptitudes of bureaucratic angels.

Soviet science fiction dreams of and often puts into its tales an unobtrusive bureaucracy headed by cultured, understanding people with a deep insight into the psychology of scientists, ever ready to aid scientific progress and eager to make the lives of scientists comfortable. Dolgushin's ideal bureaucrat, instead of being 'a monumental figure, eternal, tall and severe', is a man of quick understanding and quick action who cuts through red-tape to help scientists.[3] Nevertheless it is the bureaucrat rather than the policeman who is the villain. Granin's nice description of a bureaucrat, his uniform resplendent with medals and his girth increasing steadily like the rings of a tree [4] is met as frequently in Soviet science fiction as Dolgushin's good bureaucrat. It is taken as a matter of course that the present bureaucracy will not have changed in the near future. People will need passes to enter the doors of Moscow University and there will be the same interminable queues.[5]

Considering the formal manners of many scientists towards each other, it is partly their fault that they live under such a stilted regime. Valentina Zhuravleva's *The Astronauts* [6] has her six astronauts, embarked on a 14-year flight, still putting on their uniforms to attend formal meetings.

Soviet science fiction finds it difficult to rid itself of the tradition of secrecy and security, which frequently unconsciously creeps into its works over and above the stories overtly concerned with Stalinist 'watchfulness'. This tradition makes it difficult to imagine a future without a bureaucracy and at the same time breeds much of the illogic of science fiction. It is assumed that any manner of authority can demand instant and unquestioned secrecy. It does not seem strange to D. Dneprov in *Clay God* [7] that an American-German combine can set up a large death camp in the middle of an unfriendly Arab country unquestioned by its

[2] *Shturmovaya nedeliya*, in *Fantastika 1965* (Moscow, 1965), III, pp. 199–208.
[3] *G. Ch.* Gorky, 1960, pp. 226, 229–30, 283.
[4] *Idu na grozu* (Moscow, 1963), p. 422.
[5] viz. E. Parnev, M. Emtsov, *Bunt trista trillionov*, in *Almanakh NF* (Moscow, 1964), I, pp. 6–90.
[6] R. Magidoff, D. Johnson, *Russian Science Fiction* (New York, 1964), pp. 204–17.
[7] In *Formula besmerti* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 3–95.

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government or local curiosity. Batygin, commander of a Soviet spaceship in Igor Zabelin's *Belt of Life* [8] which is prepared for flying to Mars in man's first attempt to land on a planet, keeps his plans so secret that he only informs his crew as they are about to embark that they are flying to Venus instead, and that the whole project must be kept secret for years in order to keep the capitalists off the scent. In Belyayev's *The Star KETs* a well-established scientist apparently is unaware that his country has created artificial satellites. The two astronauts in the Strugatsky *Attempt at Flight* are almost unquestioningly commandeered by a stranger to fly to an unknown planet. Yefremov selects a strong sense of discipline as one of the most admirable traits of his man of the year 5000, and many other Soviet science fiction writers make a similar choice. But this seems to make such a man, outside his special field of research, an unquestioning individual easily manipulated by questionable demands for security.

The existence of capitalism is the frequent excuse for a prevailing secrecy. Aside from the fact that the existence of capitalism is a convenient literary device for the manufacture of villains—for in a completed communist society they are supposedly dying out or have died—it would appear that many Soviet science fiction writers are reconciled to a capitalism that has far outlived Lenin's or Khrushchev's predictions. Belyayev, Adamov, Dneprov, Kazantsev, Leonov, the Strugatskys, Volgin, Zabelin, Zagdansky, Varshavsky, Sokolova, Eidelman, all suppose a capitalism lasting at least to the end of this century.

In reading these descriptions of the capitalist world, one wonders whether they are not reverse images satirizing a communist world instead, since frequently they seem more applicable to the latter. Soviet readers of Western anti-Utopias directed against a communist order often interpret them as indictments of capitalism. The reverse compliment may easily be paid. There is nothing more reversely ironic in Adamov's *Banishment of the Lord* than his description of people fleeing in large numbers over closed Western borders to seek refuge in the Soviet Union.

Indifference to life outside one's speciality and indifference to the social consequences of one's work are widespread attributes of the Western scientist of the future in Soviet science fiction, of which Dneprov's *Chance Shot* [9] is a particularly crude example. The isolation and secrecy within which the Soviet scientist has worked is taken for granted by the scientist of the future Soviet state and is supposed to be even more of a prerequisite in the West of the future. Why the American scientist, Mandzhak, in Zagdansky's *Leap into Immortality* has to work on an uninhabited island of the Pacific at great inconvenience is never explained. Kazantsev's *Lunar Path* blames America for creating a tower of Babel in an international space programme by not yielding up its atomic secrets.

[8] *Poias zhizni* (Moscow, 1960).
[9] *Sluchainy vystrel*, in *Fantastika 1964*, pp. 179–89.

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PROMINENT in the literature of warning in the West is the fear of the dominance of the machine, but this is not a threat in Soviet science fiction. There is even embarrassment that a new slavery has been established with the robot as a slave who has become in some respects more human than living beings. Variations of the Frankenstein theme but without a moral are common, sometimes in the form of a humorous tale. The robot Siema [10] is so curious it wants to dissect its master when programmed to study physiology. Varshavsky's SUS exposes his creators as bores.[11] Emtsov and Parnov have the scientist, George, creating through the control of Gausian space a dehumanized George, a pseudo-George, and a pan-George that tries to absorb the real George.

Possibly man, with his endowments fully developed and utilized—a photographic memory, greatly improved reasoning and athletic ability, and a much longer life, will become machine-like (viz. Gor, *Kumbi*) while the machine of the future will be the more fallible of the two. A robot contemplates suicide—an act unthinkable to a man of the future.[12] While man will have controlled emotions, the machine will have built-in emotions making him the more unstable. We have a robot going mad out of both curiosity and boredom. His 15 senses give him much more feeling than humans, while at the same time he is obtuse and insensitive.[13] The harmonious man of the future will not have such problems. We cannot imagine the man of the future being so introspective as to keep a diary, as does the computer in Varshavsky's *Diary*.[14] Then we have the tragic and heroic robot, EREM, who is sent by its master to put out a fire. It is programmed to know that the heat will destroy it, but duty carries it to its fate.[15]

If the machine poses no problems in the mind of the Soviet science fiction writer, it does evoke certain regrets. In contemplating the superior development of other planets, such writers as Yefremov and Gor regret that our civilization has taken such a technological course. It would have been better if it had chosen one that was more humanistic. Both ways could be reconciled with historical materialism.

Overpopulation is not, any more than the menace of the machine, a problem for Soviet science fiction writers. But their explanations, that the earth's population crowded shoulder to shoulder could fit into a very small space (Gor), or that the earth's surplus population could migrate to the planets (Yefremov, Dolgushin, the Strugatskys) or that science will tremendously increase food supplies (Dolgushin) do not sound very convincing in the face of their wishes that the population of the earth should remain very sparse, living either in open country or small settlements,

[10] A. Dneprov, *Siema*, in I. Asimov, *More Soviet Science Fiction* (New York, 1962), pp. 89–119.
[11] I. Varshavsky, *SUS*, in *Novaya Signalnaya* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 202–04.
[12] G. Gor, *Strannik i vremiya*, in *Kumbi* (Moscow, 1963), p. 210.
[13] A. and B. Strugatsky, *Spontaneous Reflex*, in Asimov, op. cit., pp. 89–111.
[14] *Dnevnik*, in *Fantastika 1963*, pp. 275–78.
[15] G. Anfilov, *EREM* in ibid. pp. 279–83.

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and that Nature should remain unspoiled. Gurevich and Kazantsev are among the few that envision and welcome large metropolitan centres. Kazantsev sees Moscow as an unusual and dynamic city with 'palaces of height' stretching out into the suburbs.

The possibility of human immortality is rejected on ethical or psychological rather than demographic grounds. It would be unethical to Gor, because it would deny a beginning or end to things (*The Wanderer and Time*). This would make life meaningless and metaphysical (*Kumbi*). Nor is the prospect of immortality psychologically appealing. Dolgushin and Yefremov set the life span arbitrarily at between 170 and 200 years without any danger of overcrowding the earth. 'A dialectical jump' in food production, Dolgushin tells us, will eliminate the problem of feeding large populations, should we have them. The Strugatskys set the population at 20 billion in both their *Distant Rainbow* and *Attempt at Flight*, but they are careful to note that this would be the population of the earth plus its settled planets. Dolgushin has it that we should not fear 'Malthusian dogmatists' since the planets are available for settlement. But we are never told by how many people, or under what compulsion or inducement. A number of writers, with Yefremov at their head, believe that man will always have a love of adventure and danger, and these will be increasingly difficult to satisfy on earth. The real pioneer life, which contains the essence of genuine adventure, will be sought primarily in outer space.

WHILE population growth and the dominance of machines have not worried Soviet science fiction writers, they have been concerned by the problems of nationalism—both its dangers and the expectations of communist ideologists that it would die out. It became axiomatic to their writings that the further one delves into the future the more completely will national differences disappear. There will be a united world, speaking a single language, and if any government survives it will encompass the whole world and even our planetary system or universe.

In the meanwhile certain writers fan the Cold War. This could be expected of such older writers as Adamov and Rozval, as well as Leonid Leonov in his *MacKinley*, but it is far from exclusive to them. Some of the younger writers exhibit a most rabid Americanophobia—notably Kazantsev, Gurevich, Dneprov and Volgin. In the case of Dneprov's *Clay God*, there is a latent racism: Americans as well as Germans are pictured as inherently sadistic. Some of the writers in this category frequently are knowledgeable about Western art, literature and philosophy but their pictures of Western life must be drawn from Victorian novels and tabloids—resulting in a strange mixture of the old-fashioned and garish.

When not writing about America, the Soviet science fiction writers set their scenes in Western Europe which differs little from America, while among the countries favoured as settings, China remained prominent long after the political break with that country. After Moscow,

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Peking is the favourite background for international consultations and international executive bodies. China has a particular appeal for the Strugatskys, while Yefremov's Indophilia stands quite alone.

If we were to be guided by Ehrenburg's satirical novel of the future, *Julio Jurenito*, the future holds discord rather than concord between nations, but this book stands outside the mainstream of Soviet science fiction. Yefremov made the most concerted effort to internationalize the future. He obliterated nationalities by denationalizing names: Dar Veter, Niza Krit, Erg Noor, Veta Kong, Mven Mas—though Dar Veter is proud of his Russian ancestors, for they were the first cosmonauts, and Mven Mas is proud of his African blood.

More usually an internationalized society has Russian names and is centred in Moscow; or a concession is made by giving Russians Anglicized names. In the words of a character in Gor's *Wanderer and Time*, the word 'earth' now sounds like 'the Moscow region'. The Strugatskys' *Journey to Amalteya* has a friendly spaceship crew which besides Russians has a Canadian, a Frenchman and a Japanese; but only the Russians address each other as 'Comrade'.

The internationalization of society will stimulate travel. Gor tells us that in his 23rd century 'here' and 'there' will become almost synonymous. One of the principal joys of the future, according to Yefremov, will be the satisfying of man's desire to travel. In contrast to the present-day travel-starved Russian, the Russian of the future will satisfy his longing to see the outside world. On impulse he suddenly flies to the South Seas, or, as in Yefremov's *Razor's Edge*, he wanders rather purposelessly between his homeland and India, Italy, Africa and Tibet. The Strugatskys and Gor see man as a perpetual commuter.

More than in exotic lands, man's greatest pleasure will be in raw Nature. Gor sees a world without permanent dwellings. Even in the Moscow of the distant future a man wanders with his love through a virgin forest along the Moscow river.[16] Aleksander Kolpakov has cities disappear entirely by the year 4,000.[17] Yefremov is the most enthusiastic and detailed delineator of the movement back to Nature, being more interested in reconstructing the geography of the earth than in the structure of its society. Western science fiction, with Bradbury at its head, is accused of hating and fearing the machine, but in spite of claims to the contrary, Soviet science fiction often appears to be expressing unconsciously the same feelings by its precipitous flight into the countryside.

This little-disguised primitivism, whose key philosophy is expressed by Gor's wish that man fraternize with Nature rather than struggle against it, runs contrary to the Soviet ideologist's solution to the problem of permanent revolution. In the future according to the ideologist, instead of struggles of class against class, man against man, or

[16] *Cherny Svyet*, in *Luchshi iz mira*, ed. S. Mitrokhin (Moscow, 1964), pp. 192–208.
[17] *Alf Eridana* in *More Mechty* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 16–71.

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nation against nation, there will be the permanent struggle of man against Nature, which will supply him constantly with new and increasing challenges. In turn, the science fiction writers compromise with the ideologists by arguing that Nature's challenges will lie largely in outer space instead of on the earth. They agree with the ideologists in wishing to tame Nature on earth. But the ideologist sees this under the term 'exploitation', which should seem obscene to many Soviet science fiction writers when related to their beloved Nature.

It would seem that the ideal sort of home would be a small cottage, *kottedzhik*, in a spacious park which also contains the institute in which one works. When this is not practical, some sort of urban dwelling is devised. Adamov ushers us into an apartment with broad hallways, soft chairs, perfumed air, and playing fountains. The hero's father in Gor's *Kumbi*, though living in the twenty-first century, prefers to occupy a twentieth-century house. A significant number of authors—Dolgushin, Yefremov, Kazantsev and Volgin—seem obsessed by upholstered armchairs, as though they were in great scarcity. Volgin, in spite of his liking for soft chairs, would build dwellings of Spartan simplicity. Zabelin sees communism eliminating Philistinism, with its sense of possession. People will no longer pride themselves on their country cottages, cars and latest-model televisions. Their quarters will be 'Spartan-like', for man will hate anything superfluous. The furniture will be of light plastic; only there will be an abundance of potted plants at the windows. And thus the authors hover between Victorian comfort and Spartan simplicity.

The principal concession to artificiality, and consequently a principal objective of scientific endeavour next to space flight, concerns the problem of warmth. One can sympathize with a Sub-Arctic Russia, full of plans to transform the climate through the utilization of heat from volcanos, rechannelled warm ocean currents, and artificial suns. This is in the tradition of one of the first Russian science fiction stories, Prince Odoyevsky's *4438th Year*, published in 1835.

MAN will seem basically unchanged but more perfect. In some Soviet science fiction there are no bad people when we are dealing with a society which has achieved communism. Life will become both very much easier and much more difficult. All the basic wants will be satisfied, and at the same time, increasing talents will be required to cope with the challenges of the future. Non-involvement will become the great temptation of the future: the sitting back and enjoying the blessings of abundance.

The Strugatskys became specialists on the problem of historic and cosmic involvement and non-involvement.[18] But although they were

[18] viz. *Vtoroiye Nashestviye* (Moscow, 1968), *Troika*, re-published in *Grani*, 1970, *Popytka k begstvu* (Moscow, 1962), *Put na Amalteyu* (Moscow, 1960), *Vozvrashcheniye* (Moscow, 1962), *Khishchnyiye veshchi veka* (Moscow 1965), *Strana bagrovykh tuch* (Moscow, 1959).

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accused by critics of making their heroes look too passively or personally on historical events, the Strugatskys are very demanding of their heroes. In their *Six Matches*, a scientist goes far beyond the call of duty by experimenting on himself when laboratory animals would have done just as well. The opposite of non-involvement often does not stop with involvement but goes on to self-sacrifice coupled with the ideal of adventure. This has tempted many Soviet science fiction writers to put their heroes into needless or illogical danger for the sake of self-sacrifice and adventure.

On a more commonplace plane, Yefremov in particular sees the therapeutic necessity of hard physical labour. Besides the adventure of stellar flight, man will demand the back-breaking work of digging in mines or draining tropical swamps as a relief from his mental efforts. It is an error to picture the man of the future as all brain—he will be a superb physical being as well. The man of the future will be both athlete and scientist, and as a scientist he will be, among other things, a naturalist.

Considering Marx's and Lenin's ambiguous attitude towards marriage and sex in general, it is not surprising to find Soviet science fiction equally vague on this subject. Added to this circumstance is the sexlessness general to the genre, whatever the nationality, while Soviet science fiction has still a third inhibiting factor: the boy-meets-girl-meets-tractor tradition of socialist realism, brought on by the five-year plans. Love is a topic to be avoided, and when it is dealt with it is done awkwardly and incoherently.

The Strugatskys do succeed in bringing love interest into their stories, on occasion using a favourite theme of Soviet science fiction: does love of a girl or the duty of inter-stellar flight come first? Stellar flight usually wins out. The Strugatsky stories have a semblance of realism lacking in many others, but, like the rest, they do not grapple with the problem of what should be the true relationship between man and woman. Their stories may have psychological insight but are devoid of social content—the very opposite of what one might expect in Soviet science fiction.

Yefremov is entranced by the beauty of the human body. Its appreciation he ascribes to a Hellenistic-Asiatic tradition, its rejection to Christianity and Islam. In the new mores of the future, nudity will be reaccepted and appreciated. But this will not have a sociological effect. It will only stimulate and broaden the aesthetic sense, since the feminine figure is the most beautiful thing in all creation. This theme, which one might suppose would raise erotic problems, or at least adjustments, is treated as shamefacedly as it would have been by the boy-meets-girl-meets-tractor school of Soviet literature.

The heroines of Soviet science fiction are almost invariably caricatures of Turgenev heroines. The characteristics of a Turgenev heroine—strength, self-sufficiency, idealism, together with great femininity which is made latent by an unappreciative masculine world—may very well be

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what the Soviet science fiction writers are striving for but never achieve. The Soviet heroine is a monster, though outwardly we are assured by the author that she is very beautiful—a fact almost immediately forgotten. Like her male companions she is a scientist engrossed in her work and always hurrying some place. She is domineering, demanding and sexless. Somehow she manages to fall in love during her busy, busy peripatetic life.

The lack of communication between man and woman in Soviet science fiction seems slight in comparison to the lack of it between the scientist and the world, and even between scientist and scientist. Elitism, a strong sense of hierarchy, and secrecy make the world of Soviet science fiction, though nominally communist, into a world dominated by or composed of scientists. Though class conflicts have disappeared, physicists compete with biologists, graduate students dream of becoming instructors, instructors of becoming professors, and professors—academicians. The academicians and directors of scientific institutes, capricious and powerful as the gods on Olympus, can be maddening in their contrariness or bountiful in their understanding and help. They in turn dream of having a scientific law or technological process named after them.

Even taking into account the fact that science fiction deals primarily with science, one is struck by the absence of any humans other than scientists, or by their inferior and obscure role. The land of the future is studded with statues of Tsiolkovsky but none of Lenin. The artist is theoretically placed on a plane with the scientist but is generally ignored.[19] The bureaucrat who has managed to survive in the stateless society, though frequently powerful and possessing considerable prestige, is made acceptable and likable by his unobtrusiveness and appreciation of science.

Cybernetics—once so despised—mathematics, and a pantheistic search for the ultimate mechanics of the universe unobtrusively compete with dialectical materialism, though it is conceded that the communist society it posits and predicts will last into infinity and penetrate the galaxies.

A pantheistic longing to blend with Nature, and particularly excursions into realms of extra-sensory perception, have caused some critics concern about what could be regarded as departures from materialism. While Yefremov's fascination with LSD and Hinduism has passed unnoticed, the involvement of some writers with telepathy has brought accusations of idealism, as in the case of Sergei Gansovsky's *Novaya Signalnaya.*

But these speculations outside dialectical materialism do not, supposedly, affect historical materialism. The thinking process and, in

[19] The Academician, Berg, in the spirit of C. P. Snow, decries the cleavage between the arts and science. He notes that no Arts Faculty has a course on the achievements of science. Yet he takes it as a matter of course that good science fiction exclusively deals with heroic scientists. *Literatura, Nauka, Zhizn,* in *Pravda* (16 April 1967), p. 3.

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this respect, the evolutionary process, may be questioned and altered but not the historical plan of the universe. Time and space are infinite and the communist order accompanies infinity. It may be conceded that entirely different worlds exist with their distinctive problems and solutions but a communist order is still the best possible final order. Gor even projects it to several million years hence.[20]

The greatest differentiation takes place in the areas of emphasis. On the few occasions when Lenin, Stalin or Khrushchev speculated on the distant future, they regarded it from quite different points of view. The lawyer, Lenin, though he despised his profession, sees the future in *The State and Revolution* in juridical terms, i.e. whether there be an absence of laws or not due to the withering away of the state. Stalin, wrestling with the permanency of economic laws in his last pamphlet, *Economic Problems,* possibly not unmindful of his experiences with labour unions in his youth, sees the future in terms of the nature of work. Khrushchev, in his blueprint for an imminent communist order, long conditioned to hypnotic arrays of statistics of numerous five-year plans, sees the future almost entirely in production output figures. While accepting all these speculations, the Soviet science fiction writer is more interested in other things: freedom—though in a different sense than in the West—adventure, comfort, harmony, beauty.

[20] G. Gor, *Kumbi* (Moscow, 1963).

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Europe and America in a Pentagonal World *

Andrew J. Pierre

THE title does not refer to Melvin Laird and his entourage. It refers to the new shape of world politics in the 1970s. We have now entered a transitional period in which five power centres—China and Japan, in addition to Western Europe, America and the Soviet Union—will be the principal actors on the stage of international politics. Japan's emergence to its new post-war status is the result of its gradual though impressive evolution to the rank of the third most powerful economic country in the world in the 1970s. Although Japan's strength today is primarily measurable in economic terms, history teaches us that such strength is sooner or later translated into political and military power. For the People's Republic of China the process of emergence has been quite different: the end of the Cultural Revolution has stimulated a new desire to enter the world of multilateral diplomacy. This has fortunately occurred at a moment when the Western states, and in particular the United States, have finally decided to deal with this nation of 800 million people on the basis of reality, rather than of ideology or legalism.

A five-sided table will make for a complex, messy, subtle and sometimes inscrutable game. Each power centre will react to the other and billiard ball-like clashes and causations may become not uncommon. Unlike a billiard game, however, the balls will not be of equal weight. The tendency will thus be for the growth of a complicated global balance of power, with fluctuations or shifts of differing relevance and import from time to time.

Such a world will have a marked impact on relations between Western Europe and the United States. The transatlantic relationship of the past quarter-century has been built upon the construct of a bi-polar world. A perceived danger from the East led to the creation of NATO and underpinned much of the rationale for American assistance to the economic recovery of Europe. The cold war in Europe in its harsh phase lasted into the 1960s and remnants of it exist to this day. Although an intentional and massive Soviet incursion into Western Europe is now considered almost totally implausible, the West European sense of security is still subject to real erosion. Western Europe will therefore remain dependent for its sense of security upon the United States until either Moscow's aims are perceived to have undergone

* This paper is a chapter from a forthcoming book entitled *The European Communities in the 1970s*, edited by Steven Warnecke, to be published by © Praeger in the spring of 1972.

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a fundamental revision, or until an independent and adequate European defence capability comes into existence. Neither of those two contingencies are as yet within sight.

A qualitative change is nevertheless occurring in East-West relations in Europe. The sense of danger which spurred the Atlantic institutions in the past has now receded. A process of *détente*—a limited *détente* to be sure—has set in and continues despite Soviet intentions as revealed in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The signs of *détente* are everywhere in the air: the Berlin Agreement, the Bonn-Moscow and Bonn-Warsaw Treaties, SALT, discussions about negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions and about an eventual European security conference. This *détente* has already had and will continue to have a transforming effect upon the European-American relationship. Together with important changes which are occurring, or will occur, in the domestic societies and foreign relations of the other power constellations, *détente* in Europe will result in a modification of responsibility and roles in the Atlantic security community.

In order to discuss the substance of this modification we must begin by briefly examining the likely evolution of the five centres of power. Such important factors as changes in the American military role in the Pacific, Sino-Soviet relations, the growth of Japan's defence capabilities, the political spill-over of Britain's entrance into the European Economic Community, and the changing domestic consensus on American foreign policy will all have a significant impact upon the European-American relationship of the future.

IN the new era of international politics the *United States* will, at least initially, be preoccupied with healing its Vietnam wounds. During this recuperation period the attention of the nation will be turned to its own body politic. Problems concerning the cities, poverty, the pollution of the environment, race relations, crime, drugs, and so on through this dreary list, will receive priority. In foreign affairs priority will be placed upon relations with the Soviet Union and probably China, for it is there that the principal threats to peace are likely to originate or receive decisive support. The limitation of strategic armaments and the avoidance of war in the Middle East will be aims of active diplomacy. But in other areas of foreign policy Washington will seek to maintain a low profile. Military intervention in disputes in the Third World will be avoided like the plague and will only be easily justified when, for example, there exists an immediate threat involving an unambiguous treaty commitment. Such standards of selectivity and reserve would probably rule out armed interventions similar to those of the United States in the Dominican Republic in 1965, Lebanon in 1958, or even Vietnam in 1965.

The broad domestic consensus which supported American foreign policy from Pearl Harbour until the 1960s has now virtually collapsed. Until a new consensus emerges, or coalesces, an American President is

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not likely to embark upon a large-scale armed intervention (save in the direct defence of the northern hemisphere and Western Europe) without the support, perhaps an overwhelming one would be needed, of the American people. At the same time public support for the defence budget has notably decreased. The Nixon Doctrine is a response to this changed American mood and can be seen as part of a fundamental re-evaluation of the American role in the world. Despite all its ambiguities and uncertainties the doctrine does assume disengagement and a reduced American presence abroad. Thus far the line has successfully been held by the Nixon Administration on the issue of the level of US troops in Europe. It is not difficult to envisage circumstances, however, under which support for Senator Mansfield's call for a 50 per cent reduction of these troops would hold the majority in both houses of Congress. This could well come about, for example, should there be a still further deterioration of trade and monetary relations between Europe and America.

IN the *Soviet Union* the composition of foreign policy is likely to be more complex. The nature and direction of policy towards Europe may be of a different order than in the extra-European world. In the latter Moscow has embarked upon an imperialistic thrust seeking now to establish itself and be recognized as a global Superpower in addition to its status of a nuclear Superpower. This is the explanation for the development of a world-wide reach with new conventional air and sea capabilities. The expansion of the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean and into the Indian Ocean is designed to underpin foreign policy through military power utilized for political purposes. A danger will arise that the outward momentum of Soviet political-military power, when in contrast with the inward retraction of American power, will create instabilities, or opportunities for dangerous miscalculations of each other's aims, intention and resolve.[1]

In Europe, on the other hand, Soviet policy will be essentially defensive. Two preoccupations of the Soviet leadership serve to dampen the past inclination to actively seek political gain in Western Europe. The first is a rising concern regarding China. President Nixon's visit to Peking cannot but rekindle fears of a Sino-American rapprochement to the detriment of Moscow. The Chinese courting of Rumania and Yugoslavia, and the long established ties with Albania, are further signs that the Soviet position of leadership in the communist world is under increasing challenge and stress. Moreover those Russian officials responsible for the defence of the homeland are acutely aware of the steady growth of the Chinese nuclear capability and the emphasis being placed upon the development of intermediate range ballistic missiles which would be capable of reaching targets in Central Russia

[1] See Andrew J. Pierre, 'America Down, Russia Up: The Changing Political Role of Military Power', *Foreign Policy*, No. 4 (Autumn 1971).

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and Asia, though not the United States. It is not for nothing that the Soviets have amassed approximately one million soldiers on their Chinese border.

A second preoccupation arises out of pressing domestic needs. The slow growth of the Soviet economy, hamstrung by a rigidly centralized industrial structure, impedes the production of long awaited consumer goods for the population. Agricultural productivity has been lagging persistently. More important still is the continuing need for advanced technology, which is to say the importation of Western technology, trade and management methods to revive and stimulate the Soviet economy.

These concerns, among others, have forced an important revision in Soviet goals in Western Europe. The long term aims may still hold good: the elimination of the United States military presence in Europe and the reduction of American influence so as to place the entire continent under Soviet influence, if not directly as in Eastern Europe then through a gradual process of political accommodation leading to an eventual 'Finlandization'. But these aims have now, it would appear, been put on the back burner. The European Economic Community is increasingly accepted as a functioning reality. In Central Europe the intention is to stabilize the *status quo* through a series of negotiations and agreements and perhaps an eventual European Security Conference. The Moscow–Bonn and Warsaw–Bonn Treaties of 1970 are designed to open the door to increased trade and technology in a 'controlled' manner, that is without permitting to pass through the same door the infectious spread of Western liberalism and ideas. The restlessness of the Soviet intelligentsia—the Sakharovs, Amalriks, and Solzhenitsyns—may be a source of concern, but they can only be a minor one because of their limited influence and visibility within the Soviet Union. More worrisome, no doubt, are the continuing signs of instability in Eastern Europe where the Soviet military and political role is threatened by powerful economic, social and intellectual forces not susceptible to total control.[2] Nevertheless, the primary result of the important Soviet decision to enter into agreements with the West by being responsive to the Brandt Government's *Ostpolitik* and by signing a Four Power agreement on Berlin is to help stabilize East-West relations in Europe and to permit an era of negotiations, presumably designed to reduce tensions and the confrontation at the centre of the continent. The danger does exist and should be recognized, however, that the Western nations in the spirit of *détente* may let their guard down too much or too suddenly. Such an erosion of the will to defend could only be destabilizing, since it would open new opportunities for Soviet incursions and mischief-making.

WESTERN EUROPE in the early 1970s is no doubt at the stage where further evolution towards political unity is no longer an

[2] See Robert F. Byrnes, 'Russia in Europe: Hegemony Without Security', *Foreign Affairs* (July 1971).

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unreasonable expectation. After seven years of relative stagnation the passing of de Gaulle and the arrival of Brandt, among other factors, made possible the conditions which are now leading to the enlargement and deepening of the Common Market. The Community, with its membership expanded to include Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Norway, will have 250 million people and a GNP of $500 million, making it more populous than either America or the Soviet Union and richer than any country in the world except for the United States. Moreover the economic power of the Community of Ten will be impressive since it will be the largest trading entity in the world.

For the next few years the European Community is likely to be preoccupied with problems relating to its economic and monetary integration as well as the effects of its expansion. By the mid-1970s, however, a second stage will be reached and it is then that the question of further progress in political consultations and defence will be most acutely posed. The fundamental impetus behind the quest for European integration has never been primarily economic. It has derived from the surprisingly rapid loss of power of the European states in the mid-20th century and their recognition that only by banding together might they exert real influence in the international political environment of the future. With the United States increasingly turning its activity, if not its attention, to other parts of the globe and to its own domestic problems, and with Soviet-American relations increasingly becoming an essentially bilateral matter as in SALT, the Western European states will have sufficient incentive to deepen political relations and develop common foreign and defence policies.

More will be said about defence later in this article. A start on co-ordinating foreign policy took place following the Hague Summit meeting with the recommendations of the Davignon Report calling for periodic consultations on foreign policy by foreign ministers. The first meetings were held on the problems of a Middle East settlement and the Soviet proposal for a European Security Conference. As might have been expected these meetings led to little more than a restatement of government views which were already clear from their exposition in other forums. Foreign policy is still very much a sovereign matter jealously guarded over by individual national governments, often following differing interests and objectives. The growing interdependence which is evident among the advanced industrial states in matters of economics and technology does not extend as readily to gut political issues. Nevertheless, this modest start is a recognition that there are many interests which bind the West Europeans together and that these will be growing.

It is too early to speak of the exact content of a 'European foreign policy' but not too early to visualize what it will be concerned with. Such a policy will be more 'regional' than 'global', with attention devoted to the European continent and its adjacent areas, as well as to the United States. A co-ordinated if not common approach to the

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Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would be likely. This might also be co-ordinated with the United States, especially on issues involving security and arms control. Similarly, a common approach to the underbelly of Europe in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa could be envisaged. In Asia, Africa south of the Sahara, and Latin America, however, where European political (in contrast to economic) interests have greatly diminished, a common foreign policy is less likely. Past American efforts to achieve NATO-wide accord on policies towards the Third World, in the Congo and Cuba for example, have been singularly unsuccessful. The European states may eventually again play a global role, but this will require a far greater European supranationality than is likely to be achieved within the present institutional framework.

THE opening of a totally new chapter in Sino-American relations in 1971 with the invitation extended to President Nixon to visit Peking, preceded by the easing of trade and travel restrictions, signalled the intention of Communist *China* to move onto the world diplomatic stage as one of the leading actors. This has now been ratified with the People's Republic occupancy of the Chinese seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. The playing by Mainland China of the role in world politics which by most criteria it should have had some time ago will complicate the multipolarity of tomorrow's world.

China appears to be more ready now than in the past to participate in the international community, principally because the internal turmoil and disruption created by the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution is over with. The ageing Chinese leadership, moreover, is anxious to complete the Chinese revolution by receiving the recognition of the outside world before passing on its mantle to a younger and less ideologically inspired generation. But fundamental geopolitical factors are also at play. China appears to be strongly motivated in its still limited 'normalization' of relations with the United States by two deep fears. One stems from the growing hostility between China and the Soviet Union, which now seems fundamentally irreconcilable except under conditions of grave threat to both nations emanating from a single source. Serious Chinese concern about a nuclear war with Russia, as evidenced by the vast nuclear defence tunnels in the major cities, or anxiety about a 'surgical strike' against its nuclear facilities should not be underrated. Nor should one underestimate Chinese worries about a Russian-launched 'preventive' war along the extended border growing out of the frequent clashes there. A second fear arises out of Japanese prosperity and its economic penetration of countries on China's periphery, especially Taiwan and South Korea. With the expansion of Japanese economic influence, it is believed, will grow a renewed militarism. Fear of encirclement by an aggressive Japanese military state and a hostile Russia, with both nations some day possessing nuclear weapons, appears to be of greater concern to Peking than is the United States, which is

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now in the process of substantially reducing its military bases and forces in Asia.

With Communist China seeking—perhaps accepting is more apt—relations with the United States in order to balance Russia and Japan, we are entering a new phase of multipolarity. Moscow worries about collusion between Washington and Peking against its own interests—while the Chinese equally fear a Soviet-American alliance against them. At the side sits Japan, ready to develop closer ties with Peking but feared by China's leaders—a Japan which remains closely allied to the United States in spite of the recent 'Nixon shocks' but which may well be tempted to strike out on its own. As for the United States, in the coming years it is less likely to focus its policies on the 'containment' of China. Such a change of perceptions, involving a down-grading in official Washington of the 'Chinese threat', preceded ping-pong diplomacy and the announcement of Nixon's trip. The Nixon Doctrine of disengagement and reduction in America's overseas military role in effect rules out the same degree of continued close-in military containment of China with bases and forces on its borders. Entrance by China into the United Nations equally rules out a policy of attempting to keep the People's Republic politically and economically isolated. The new pattern of great power relationships may be more complex and differentiated, but it is possible that in this global system there may also be found additional elements making for international stability.

As for the meaning of this for Western Europe, China's emergence will further divert the attention of the Soviet Union from its Western to its Eastern borders. The Chinese in turn are conscious of the potentials of Europe for their own purposes. The winds emanating from Peking towards Brussels have recently become warmer. The Common Market is now seen as having a double value, initially as a source of trade but perhaps even more importantly as part of the political mechanism with which Peking hopes to balance the Soviet Union. Creating such a balance has long been the aim of Chinese policy in Albania and the new attention given by Peking to Rumania and Yugoslavia must be seen as an attempt to strengthen further the political mechanism by adding to the strings limiting Soviet freedom of action.

THE fifth side of the Pentagonal relationship, *Japan*, has had and continues to sustain an economic growth more rapid than any major nation. During the coming decade it could surpass the Soviet Union to become the second strongest economic power in the world. Japan's important economic position is already placing it at the centre of international negotiations on trade, aid and investment. Its technology and economy have become interdependent with those of the other advanced industrial nations, a fact which is symbolized by its membership in OECD. In addition Japan's industry and investment are extending outward to many of her Asian neighbours, which in turn gives her political influence in these countries.

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The extent to which this growth in economic power will be matched by growth in military capacity and international political influence is difficult to assess. It is unlikely, however, that there will not be considerable 'spill-over' into the military and political field. Japan's potential military power is very great indeed, and already estimates of that potential enter the calculations of policy planners in foreign affairs ministries.

There is little question that Japan could become an operational nuclear power in a short time, perhaps in only 12 to 24 months, once such a political decision had been taken. Both the existing civil nuclear programme and the Japanese missile capability are highly developed. In recent years Japan's 'self-defence' military forces have been considerably enlarged and equipped with sophisticated weapons. The proportion of the GNP spent on defence remains a low 1 per cent, but given the present 11 per cent annual growth of the GNP, even that provides for significant increases in defence capacities. There are, moreover, several reasons why the enlargement of the armed forces can be expected. The partial disengagement of the United States from Asia as it withdraws from Vietnam in keeping with the Nixon Doctrine could be seen as creating a void; limiting such a vacuum would be all the more desirable because of the increasing Japanese economic stake in the area. The return of China to an active political role in the region, as well as the constant growth of the Chinese nuclear capability, could be seen as requiring some redress. Finally, the famous 'nuclear allergy' and the public opposition to defence forces appear to be receding with the rise of a more nationalist younger generation less affected by Hiroshima and the experience of the second world war.

We can therefore expect that Japan's political and diplomatic stature will increase; it has been lagging behind her economic status but it is likely to catch up. Although the Japanese-American security alliance will continue, the military dependence upon the United States will diminish. This would be in keeping with the rising nationalist aspirations of those who want Japan to take a stance more independent of the United States and more reflective of the political leverage to which she is entitled by her economic power. President Nixon's trip to Peking will also result in the re-opening of Japanese-Chinese relations. On the other hand, the end of the Japanese-American security alliance would be unfortunate, if not disastrous, for the stability of Asia. Should the American nuclear umbrella be closed, it is likely that Japan would 'go nuclear', a step which might then be followed by India, Australia and perhaps others.

There are many in Japan who do not want to see the country undertake a greater world political and military role. Some are moved by moral considerations, while others are struck by the advantages of the present situation of economic prosperity without equivalent international responsibilities. It is unlikely, however, that Japan can avoid stepping further out on the diplomatic stage. This may be necessary to protect

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her economic stakes in Asia and it may be the pre-condition for the organization of a regional system to assure stability and peace in the Western Pacific area.

The international system of the 1970s (and beyond) will be dominated by five centres of power: United States, Soviet Union, Western Europe, China and Japan. This is a different system from the one which set the parameters of world politics for the first quarter-century following the second world war and which provided the base for the construction of the post-war Atlantic institutions. What we are witnessing is the erosion through various stages of the relatively simple bi-polar system and its transformation into a pentagonal multipolar system (which still contains some important elements of the old Soviet-American bi-polar confrontation). The new system will be more complex and difficult to manage. It will require more subtle and sophisticated diplomacy, reminiscent perhaps of the 19th century balance of power.

WE must now ask what effect the emerging pentagonal system will have upon European-American relations. American diplomacy will have an increasingly global rather than Atlantic outlook. Attention will be devoted to worldwide accommodation and arms control with the Soviet Union and to developing a relationship with China and Japan that will help assure peace and stability in the Pacific. Within the Atlantic concept, Washington will seek to shift the United States from a position of predominance to equal partner in the sharing of common responsibilities.

This is not to suggest a general withdrawal or a loss of interest in Europe. There can be no such thing. Western Europe will always remain 'number one'. There is no other part of the globe which can match the historical, cultural, political, economic and psychological ties with the United States. Two world wars have now been fought by America on the premise that a free Western Europe is essential to its own security, and this premise is not likely to be altered. It is well to recall, also, that whatever friction may exist between Europe and America, and whatever be the risks of a continuing trade war and monetary crisis, trade across the Atlantic remains the world's greatest; mutual investments are substantial, especially American investments in Europe; exchange of technology is high, as is the flow of tourism. No other international (and transnational) relationship shares as great a number of mutual interests. This is perhaps the chief lesson to be learned from the resolution of the 1971 monetary crisis.

World conditions and the overriding need to maintain peace will nevertheless lead the United States to devote much of its attention to global accommodation with the Soviet Union and regional stability in the Pacific. In addition, coping with and ameliorating the manifold problems of American society will drain energies which in the past, before these domestic needs were understood and recognized, were spent on foreign policy. Moreover, it is now recognized that foreign and domestic

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policies are constructs of the same body; that an unhealthy society at home does not provide the necessary base for an enlightened external policy. Finally, an additional item on the foreign policy agenda of the future which will consume increasing amounts of attention and resources will be the global problems resulting from science, technology and the environment. The growing interdependence of states in dealing with these issues, and the pressing need for modified or new international institutions, will be another item of priority in American foreign policy.

We can therefore expect, with some confidence, that the United States will press for a substantial devolution of its security responsibilities in Europe in the 1970s. We must then ask: what should be the response of a 'united Europe'?

THE conclusion I have come to is that Western Europe needs to develop additional or revived institutions if it is to handle successfully the challenges which will be placed before it. Not to develop new or changed institutions would, I believe, lead to a further erosion of the influence of the West European states in world politics, including influence on the important process of negotiations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on the outstanding issues of European security. It would also create new and more serious difficulties in the transatlantic relationship with the United States.

The challenges facing Europe will be, first, to create a European sense of common identity in matters relating to its own security. This involves cooperative efforts in defence affairs and eventually a certain amount of integration of national military efforts. Beyond this is the more fundamental psychological need to be able to speak with one voice to the United States. Europe needs this in order to retain its confidence and self-respect. The United States desires it because of its need for an *interlocuteur valable*. One could go even further and suggest that Europe is more likely to keep the United States constructively involved in securing its welfare the more it is able to express its will with one voice to Washington. A quarrelling or passive Europe is less likely to engage the attention of Americans. Contrary to the views of some revisionist historians or polemicists of the radical left, the United States does not wish to keep Western Europe weak and divided in order to maintain its hegemonic and entrepreneurial position. Recent and future economic difficulties between Europe and America notwithstanding, the long-term aim of a United Europe which has animated US policy since the close of World War II will remain valid.

A second challenge will be to make further progress towards a European settlement. The present situation of a European continent sharply divided politically, economically and militarily, with a massive confrontation of armed forces and atomic weapons can be lived with if necessary, but remains a second-best alternative. It would be a disappointing way to close the 20th century. This was *explicitly* recognized in the past decade by de Gaulle's vision of '*détente, entente, et co-*

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opération' and the *Ostpolitik* of successive West German governments; it was *implicitly* understood through the great public longing for *détente*. Developments within the Soviet Union may make it possible to undertake a wide range of negotiations aimed to reduce the confrontation, possibly through a series of European security conferences. The task for Western Europe will be to orchestrate its *détente* policy among its member states and with the United States. The divisive nature within the Western Alliance of separate and uncoordinated roads to Moscow became clear in the 1960s prior to the intervention in Czechoslovakia.

Third, and most uncertain and problematical, will be the need to find a way for Europe to play a role beyond Europe. Europe may sink into the provincialism of a large Switzerland, but such a role would be unworthy of its past heritage and present talents. One should not expect, on the other hand, a 'third force' Europe capable of playing an independent Superpower role. This requires far greater political cohesion within Europe than we can presently see on the horizon—and that is precisely the point. Europe must make further progress in political integration if it is to be an active participant in the pentagonal world. This will require both new institutional mechanisms and political courage. Such mechanisms should include a far greater capability than presently exists to intermesh the economic, political, security and social aspects of policy. The way in which economic disputes between, for example, the EEC and a non-EEC country can undermine political relations is now coming to be understood, but 'economic policy' too often still remains separated from 'foreign policy'.

A 'European' Europe, one which has evolved a regional identity and political capacity, need not be a bane for the United States. It should rather be in a position to accept new tasks and compensate for the devolution of responsibility from the United States. In a world of greater multipolarity it will be all the more crucial that the Old and New Worlds collaborate together on common goals. For Europe not to face up to the challenges of the future would mean a gradual demoralization and eventual accommodation with the Soviet Union. In sum, we would then have a quadrilateral world! On the other hand, a 'European foreign policy' will not always be completely aligned with that of the United States—and an active and imaginative American foreign policy should not seek to maintain such a close alignment at all times.

THE defence institutions which are needed would be modest ones designed to create a European defence grouping of limited functions and power. The authority of such a group might be extended if Western Europe makes further progress in political integration. An excellent opportunity for progress in defence coordination will come about in the years after Britain's entry into the European Community. There are some persons who argue that if the aim of European political unity is to be pushed further, a start will first have to be made on a closely integrated defence. Although this claim has some merit, it must also

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be recognized that security touches upon the quick of sovereignty, and that a high degree of integration in defence presupposes agreement among nations on fundamental questions of national security, on the nature of any threats, and the best methods of dealing with them.

A European defence grouping must therefore be 'modest' because Europe itself is still at a rudimentary stage of political development. The other side of the coin is that, for at least the next decade or two, Western Europe will remain ultimately dependent upon the United States commitment to its security. As long as there is a perceived threat to Europe from the Soviet Union and as long as the western end of the Eurasian land mass is not politically united, the United States must continue to act as the balancer. The only alternative to the American nuclear umbrella is a full-scale European nuclear deterrent, and this is not feasible for as far ahead as we can see. The military requirements of such a deterrent are roughly equal to the panoply of nuclear forces of the Superpowers; the political requisites are even more daunting. The control arrangements for such a force would require a political authority capable of deciding on its use on behalf of Europe. Perhaps only a President of Europe with full authority in a nuclear crisis could endow a European deterrent with full credibility.

For this reason a new European defence grouping must be within the Atlantic Alliance framework and should not be a competitor of NATO. This would argue against placing it within the formal EEC machinery. Conceivably it could be an expansion in authority of the present Euro-group within NATO. Another possibility would be to base it upon the existing Western European Union which consists of Britain and the present EEC members. It would be important, probably crucial to its success, that France be a participant and this would be a critical factor in coming to agreement upon the proper institutional setting.

Such a grouping—let us call it from here on the European Defence Commission—would be involved with the whole range of defence capabilities, especially conventional forces, nuclear forces, and the procurement of armaments. With respect to conventional forces the Commission's prime task would be improvements of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature since a substantial increase in European forces is unlikely at least as long as the present climate of *détente* persists. A good deal could be done, nonetheless, to make the West European armed forces more effective through rationalization and integrative methods. This would include combining logistic systems, coordinating mobilization plans, joint training exercises, and common reserve policies. In addition a common Western European 'offset' arrangement with the United States to alleviate the costs, especially in the balance of payments, of the stationing of American forces in Europe might help lessen pressures to reduce them.

Some reduction of American combat troops in Western Europe during the 1970s is, in my opinion, inevitable. The Nixon Administra-

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tion thus far has successfully resisted attempts in the Senate to reduce forces unilaterally. Past pressures have stemmed from balance of payments concerns, the feeling that Western Europe is now prosperous and should be carrying a greater share of the burden of its own defence, the whole question of 'national priorities', the squeeze on the Pentagon budget, the tendency to shed responsibility resulting from the traumatic experience of Vietnam, and a certain amount of mid-Western 'Mansfieldism'. What I believe will now be added to this will be a growing consensus within the executive branch of the US government that these forces should be reduced in order to avoid less desirable cuts in other parts of the defence budget. In addition there will be a re-examination of NATO strategy which will place less value on the Kennedy-McNamara concept of controlled and flexible response.

There is virtually no chance that US troops will be totally withdrawn as has been sometimes unthinkingly suggested and unknowledgeably feared. American forces are living hostages to guarantee to the West Europeans that the United States would be involved in a conflict in Europe. But neither is there some magic number below which the number of troops cannot descend. The 'hostage' function would no doubt be as well performed by one-third of the present level of 300,000. The 'permissible' amounts of reduction which can be safely made will be dependent upon the political psychology and confidence of the Europeans, taking into account their reading of Soviet intentions. Another criterion will be the manner of the reductions and whether they are made in concert with a parallel reduction in Warsaw Pact forces. An important function of the European Defence Commission would be to ensure that any American reductions are made as a result of a collaborative approach with the West European nations. A secondary, but critical, task would be to take the lead in the drawing up of a new NATO strategic doctrine if the present flexible response strategy becomes no longer adequate or feasible because of the reduction of forces.

Discussion of the nuclear component of a European Defence Commission raises controversial and complex issues, but I do not believe that they can be avoided indefinitely. The divisive intra-Alliance debate on the multilateral nuclear force (MLF) proposal by the United States in the early 1960s has resulted in nuclear questions being swept under the carpet. Clearly the MLF illustrated the folly of the United States' attempting to impose a totally new and elaborate weapons system upon its allies on the assumption that this is what they wanted or needed. Nevertheless, the defence of Western Europe will continue to rest in the final analysis upon a strategy of nuclear deterrence. One must consider that: (1) in the pentagonal world the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee, especially if there is a SALT agreement, will be subject to further erosion; (2) the British and French nuclear forces will not be allowed to wither away and their future will greatly affect the future of West European security; (3) in the long run a 'uniting Europe' cannot acquire

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a sense of confidence based on greater autonomy without coming to grips with the intricacies of its nuclear defence.

If the present SALT negotiations between Russia and America lead to an agreement prescribing quantitative limitations, this will result in the codification of rough strategic parity. It is then likely that Europeans will have still less faith in the credibility of the American nuclear deterrent. A convincing argument can be made that the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States on behalf of Europe became implausible when America became subject to Soviet missile retaliation in the late 1950s. What counts, however, is people's perceptions and beliefs, and most (excluding de Gaulle, but for different reasons) were prepared to accept Mr McNamara's contention that it was the US nuclear 'superiority' which did much to make the guarantee credible.

A United States-Soviet Union agreement in SALT would be welcome to the West Europeans because it would be seen as curbing the arms race and adding to world stability, but it may also further erode the nuclear guarantee. On the other hand, the failure to reach a SALT agreement could be even more unfortunate from the European point of view. If the two Superpowers were unable to agree on limitations they might then proceed to build and deploy ABM systems. This would leave Western Europe—which because of the expense, problems of command and control, and geographical proximity to the Soviet Union would be unlikely to build its own missile defence—with a sense of nuclear nakedness. Either way, therefore, the Europeans will be forced to re-examine the extent of their nuclear dependence upon the United States.

Part of this re-evaluation for Britain and France will involve their independent strategic forces. These nuclear forces exist and will not be renounced. The lesson of the extensive European nuclear debate of the past two decades is that London and Paris will not accept a non-nuclear role, leaving Western deterrence solely to the United States. Even if the abstract logic of some strategic analysts suggests that 'rationally' these forces should be abandoned—that they cannot be employed against the USSR without inviting holocaustal retribution—the political, military, bureaucratic, psychological and security incentives and pressures which led to their creation and maintenance point elsewhere.[3] These nuclear forces will eventually, however, need to be modernized and new generations will have to be constructed, particularly if there is further ballistic missile defence deployment in the Soviet Union. This would present the opportunity for an imaginative cooperative undertaking, involving the non-nuclear states of Western Europe as well as the United States

The task, as challenging as it is important, would be to harness the existing nuclear forces in the service of all of Western Europe. This

[3] See Andrew J. Pierre, *Nuclear Politics: The British Experience with an Independent Strategic Force, 1939–70* (Oxford University Press, London, 1972).

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would have to be done with the active and participating support of the non-nuclear states of Europe and in close collaboration with the United States. Earlier I have stated that an independent European nuclear deterrent, capable by itself of balancing the Soviet Union, is not feasible mainly because of the problem of its control. But a greater European nuclear role within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance *is* possible and should be given serious consideration.

My proposal, outlined in greater detail elsewhere,[4] would involve the creation of a 'European Nuclear Committee' and a new set of nuclear relationships between Britain, France and the United States. The French and British nuclear forces would be jointly placed at the service of the European Nuclear Committee (ENC) on which they and the non-nuclear European countries would also sit. The main purpose of the ENC (which could be part of the European Defence Commission) would be to formulate political guidelines on when these nuclear forces should be used and to plan for the numerous contingencies which might be entailed. Since almost all such contingencies would also involve the activation of the American strategic forces, such guidelines would be worked out with the United States but they would have the advantage of presenting a unified European position to Washington.

The central element of command and control could not be delegated to the ENC without there existing a highly integrated, politically unified 'Europe'. But British and French targeting plans would be coordinated with each other, and in turn coordinated with the United States in the same manner as British plans have been in the past. Nuclear strategy would thus become a common undertaking and a matter of close consultations. In practical reality Britain and France would have three sets of target plans: 'Atlantic Alliance', 'European' and 'National', the latter in the unlikely event that independent action should ever be desirable.

The European Nuclear Committee, in addition to being an appropriate forum for discussions of plans and strategy, could have an important role in the development of the next generation of European nuclear weapons. These weapons could then be built on 'Europe's behalf'. The non-nuclear states might be asked to assist in their manufacture or to make a financial contribution. Although ultimate control would remain with London and Paris, the participation of the other European states would grant them a vote on matters ranging from the choice of nuclear systems to general guidelines for their use.

Agreement on purpose and use of the forces would then make possible collaboration on their construction and manufacture. An '*entente nucléaire*' between Britain and France already has a great deal of logic. The technology of their nuclear forces is remarkably complementary and suitable for exchange. Britain has a great deal of experience and

[4] Andrew J. Pierre, 'Nuclear Diplomacy: Britain, France and America', *Foreign Affairs* (January 1971), pp. 283–305.

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knowledge about warheads, but little about propulsion systems since it has bought American missiles for the past decade. France, in turn, has developed independently land and sea-based missile systems but is behind in sophisticated multiple warhead technology. Possible collaboration between the two has always run into difficulty because the United States, having given Britain a great deal of atomic information and assistance over the past two decades, does not permit this knowledge to be passed on to a third country. Although the British nuclear programme developed a good deal of knowledge on its own (the first British atomic bomb, detonated in 1952, was manufactured without US assistance), it is so intertwined with that of the United States that it would be impossible to identify the major aspects of the nuclear programme which are solely of British origin. The ability to cut the Gordian knot therefore lies in the hands of the United States. Washington could free the British of existing restraints to collaborate with the French; or it could offer direct assistance to France and continue as in the past with Britain. In the mid-1970s relevant sections of the Anglo-American nuclear exchange agreement of 1958 will come up for termination or renewal. At that time it might be best to 'Europeanize' the present American nuclear relationship with Britain.

The proposal for a European Nuclear Committee based on the continuing British and French forces, as outlined here, would strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. It would be of special importance to the Federal Republic of Germany as the only major West European power without an independent nuclear capability. It would certainly require, and might make possible, the return of France to the integrated defence system since it would give France a prominent place in the major European defence undertaking. It would be in accord with the Non-Proliferation Treaty since it would not include a transfer of nuclear weapons, or their control, to non-nuclear powers. For the coming period, it would have an important symbolic value—in time it could be the centrepiece of the security of a United Europe.

The joint procurement of armaments would be the third major task of a European Defence Commission. The need for a much greater amount of European cooperation in arms production than exists at present stems from the spiralling cost of weapons at a time of increasing sophistication in the technology of warfare. This coincides with pressure to maintain defence budgets at the present level, or preferably to reduce them. Such pressures are likely to continue if not accelerate if the present climate of *détente* continues and leads to a series of East-West agreements on European security.

The difficulties of the defence industries of the European countries are in many respects not unlike the broader problem of European non-military technology as faced with American competition. Whether the 'gap' be managerial or technological, or both, it is clear that without greater intra-European cooperation in high cost technology, such as computers, it is extremely difficult to compete with American industry. One

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of the particular problems of defence technology is the relative inelasticity of the demand. The national market is limited and often not sufficiently large. In the case of expensive weapon systems, such as aircraft, it is often essential that foreign orders be assured before a decision on production is made.

The history of joint weapons projects in Europe in the past 15 years is a distressing one. Of all the projects planned, more were left unfinished than were completed. Often the unfinished projects led to bitter charges and disputes between officials of the governments concerned. Equally often it has proved impossible to come to prior agreements on the weapons which were under consideration for development.[5] Two reasons can be cited for this: first, the insistence by governments that they receive a ' just return ' on their investment in the form of orders for their industry of equal value to what they put into the jointly produced weapons; second, the difficulty that military services of two or more countries have in coming to agreement upon the desired specifications for weapons.

The root of the problem is that agreement on weapons and their requirements presupposes agreement on strategy and defence policy. If Germany and the Netherlands, for example, are unable to agree on the tactical strategy for resistance to a frontal attack it is unlikely that they will agree on the specifications for an anti-tank weapon.

A European Defence Commission would help solve many of these dilemmas by requiring a far greater degree of European cooperation at all levels of defence planning. Once the basic European defence strategy was worked out (in concert with NATO), the Commission would facilitate agreement on common research and development, weapon specification, joint funding, production, etc. These functions might also become the responsibility of the Commission. European collaboration would thereby create a European-wide market, capable of producing armaments more efficiently and cheaply, and thereby better able to compete in the world market. This would be another big step in strengthening the European pillar of Western defence.[6]

THE second major challenge facing Western Europe, we have noted, will be the negotiation of a European political settlement. This will involve a broad spectrum of political, economic, military, and technological issues; it will also draw into the process of negotiation the Soviet Union, the East European states, Western Europe, and the United States.

[5] The failure of the Anglo-French variable geometry aircraft is an example. See J. M. Ramsden, ' Europe Learns Some Hard Lessons: Disillusion in Aerospace Cooperation ', *Roundtable* (October 1969), pp. 363–68.

[6] For further discussion of armament procurement problems, see *Defence, Technology and the Western Alliance*, papers issued by the Institute for Strategic Studies (London, 1967), especially the paper by Alastair Buchan, *The Implication of a European System for Defence Technology*. Also, Christopher Layton, *European Advanced Technology* (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969), Walter Schutze, *European Defence Cooperation and NATO*, The Atlantic Institute, Paper No. 3, 1969.

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Such a process has indeed already been well started with the Bonn-Moscow and Bonn-Warsaw Treaties, the Berlin Agreement, the informal exploratory negotiations concerning a European Security Conference, and SALT.

The starting point in the quest for reconciliation in Europe is the perception that the Soviet military threat to Western Europe has markedly declined. This view is widely held by the public, although the governments and bureaucracies are less confident of a risk-free world. Still the danger as now perceived is less of a military threat than of a gradual political and psychological undermining. The very process of negotiation with the East is mistrusted by many persons because of the risk that it will lead to a false euphoria and '*détente*-mindedness'. This could induce an accommodation with the Soviet Union which would be disadvantageous to the West if its interests were not strongly upheld. At the same time it is instructive to note that by 1975 half of the voters in Western Europe will have been born since the second world war. For this generation the Czechoslovakian *coup* of 1948 and the Korean War are dim and distant history. They see the *military* security of Europe as having been successfully achieved through NATO and possible future arms control negotiations. *Political* security is to be sought through some reconciliation with the East.

The road to a political settlement as seen by many West Europeans is the 'normalization' of relations between the two halves of the continent. This became the policy of the West German government in the latter 1960s, especially after the SPD/FDP coalition came into power. After Brandt came to office he abandoned the last vestiges of the Hallstein Doctrine of non-recognition of states which had diplomatic relations with East Germany. Also abandoned was the previous 're-unification first' policy as negotiations were entered into with the East. The Bonn-Moscow and Bonn-Warsaw Treaties, coupled with the Berlin Agreement, are in themselves significant first steps.[7] But they bring only modest improvements in the long-term task of tearing down the partition of Europe. The diplomatic freeze of the post-war years has begun to thaw. West Germany can no longer be accused by the Soviet Union of being an aggressive, 'revanchist' power. Access to West Berlin will be unimpeded and travel in East Germany has been facilitated. But Soviet troops remain stationed in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland; the Brezhnev Doctrine has not been renounced; Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe is intact and the ugly Berlin Wall still stands. Peace in Europe remains, therefore, a distant goal.

One way to work towards the achievement of this goal is the negotiation of arms control agreements for Central Europe. The overall purpose of such arrangements would be not to radically change the present military balance, but to secure it with fewer armed forces and at

[7] See Andrew J. Pierre, 'The Bonn-Moscow Treaty of 1970: Milestone or Mirage?', *Russian Review* (January 1971).

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less cost. Thus East-West negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) must be carefully planned and executed so as to maintain, if not improve, the present level of stability. Another aim of arms control is to reduce uncertainty and the risk of the start of conflict by accident or miscalculation. A number of steps to assure this—the establishment of observation posts by NATO and the Warsaw Pact in each other's territory, the setting up of an emergency 'hot line'—could be undertaken in Europe. Negotiations on arms control in Europe would be a European corollary to SALT. Although the Superpowers would of necessity have to participate, the dominant interest would be that of the Europeans, West and East.

A European Security Conference would in one way or another be concerned with arms control, but it would also deal with a far broader range of issues. These would include trade, technological assistance, cultural exchange, and a number of East-West political understandings designed to clear up the underbrush of misconception and distrust. Such a pan-European conference would be limited in what it could achieve, if only because of the manifold issues to be discussed and the more than 30 nations that would participate. It is perhaps better to think of a European Security Conference as an ongoing process, as a series of meetings, possibly with specialized sub-groups working piecemeal towards a general political settlement. A permanent machinery, such as a European Security Commission, might be set up, perhaps in Berlin, so as to institutionalize the process.[8] For the East Europeans such a series of meetings would offer the advantage of increasing their flexibility and independence within the Warsaw Pact and COMECON. As to Western Europe, there is no reason why the process of East-West *détente* should divert attention from the movement towards European unity. A post-war settlement with the East cannot be given second priority to the evolution of the Brussels institutions, but should proceed side by side with the strengthening of a Western Europe less dependent upon the United States. Such a revitalized Western Europe may provide the best hope for the foundation of a stable peace.

Europe should be able to play a fuller global role in the pentagonal world of the future. Following the events of the early 1970s the opportunity now exists for the growth of political and defence institutions and the coordination of foreign policy so as to achieve a common purpose. Whether Europe accepts the challenge now before it remains to be seen. A quarter of a century ago Europe lacked the necessary material resources to maintain its world role but still had the political interest. Today Europe has acquired the needed resources. Whether it also has the required political will and resolve depends upon its own discipline and political creativity.

[8] See Timothy W. Stanley, *A Conference on European Security? Problems, Prospects, and Pitfalls*, The Atlantic Council of the United States, 1970. See also Andrew J. Pierre, 'Reconciliation in Europe: A Western Approach to the European Security Conference', *Interplay*, Vol. 3, No. 10 (July 1970).

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Misbehavioural Sciences

Maurice Cranston

Programming humans

PROFESSOR B. F. Skinner's latest book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* [1] enjoyed a *succès fou* in America, where it was published some six months earlier than the English edition. It deserves its success. It is written in Skinner's best style, clear, crisp and vigorous; it is also exceptionally honest and straightforward. Moreover, it has been subject to the kind of attacks in America which must prompt any fair-minded reader to spring to its defence. Nevertheless, I believe its argument to be false and its influence mischievous.

What is remarkable about Skinner is not that he says anything new: but rather that he is almost alone among living scientists in subscribing to views which were held by the *avant garde* theorists of the Age of Reason, from Francis Bacon to Baron d'Holbach, but abandoned by virtually everybody else, after Hume and Kant and Rousseau and Hegel had bowed the Age of Reason out. To put the matter very simply, Skinner rests his case on two fundamental doctrines. First, that man is a machine: and second, that science can save us. The relation between these two principles is a perplexing one. For the first is linked to the belief that the purpose of science is simply to acquire empirical or factual knowledge. Like all other behaviourists, Skinner has given assent to this. His type of psychology is a science of man's (or other animal's) behaviour, a science entirely based on laboratory observation of external movements. For behaviourism, a fact is a publicly verifiable or testable phenomenon. Hence, the banishment from science, by behaviourists, of 'introspection', the 'mind', and other 'ghostly' entities which cannot be seen, touched, or measured.

A conception of science which is so dogmatically empiricist distinguishes carefully between the realm of fact and the realm of value. Science, it claims, is concerned only with the empirical. The normative—the realm of value—is removed to the sphere of philosophy, or of personal preference. To be more exact, this distinction has been used by scientists since the time of David Hume, who was the first to insist that the empirical and the normative are separate logical categories. But Skinner, unlike the main stream of modern behaviourists, belongs to the pre-Humean tradition. He holds *both* that science is concerned with facts, *and* that the aim of science is, in the words of Francis Bacon, 'to better the life of man on earth'. This is the paradox of Skinner's position: that he considers science to be confined in the first place to the study of facts, and yet to be directed, in the second place, towards the realization of certain values: what he himself, echoing Bacon's words, calls 'a better life for man'. This paradox can only be resolved if science is regarded simply as a technique, something to be put at the service of a policy, which is not itself scientific, but rather political or social.

This, at any rate, was how Bacon and Holbach looked on science, and Skinner's last book places him squarely in their company. Both

[1] New York, Knopf, 1971; London, Jonathan Cape, 1972.

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these earlier exponents of the idea that science can save us believed in enlightened despotism. Holbach actually used the phrase: '*le despotisme éclairé*': Bacon did not have to, because at the beginning of the seventeenth century despotism was so much the common order of the day that other, and more respectable names could be given it. But no reader of Bacon could doubt what he had in mind: the rule of science must mean the end of the practice of politics. Science could say what should be done: but it would need to have a strong, swift, efficient head of state to make sure that the recommendations of science were put into practice: and that the pursuit of scientific knowledge was facilitated by the generous provision of revenue. Not a philosopher king: but a monarch who would do what science demanded. Political arguments, parliament, democracy, even the rule of law were seen as time-wasting impediments to the rule of science: hence the preference among science-minded *idéologues* of the Age of Reason for *le despotisme éclairé*. To them it seemed obvious and manifestly reasonable. So we ought not to be astonished to find the same kind of thing being said today by Professor Skinner.

THE title of Skinner's new book gives us a clue to his main contention: *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. In what sense 'beyond'? The answer is simple. Fanciful metaphysical illusions about human freedom and human dignity, Skinner thinks, stand in the way of effective action to produce a better culture. Our present civilization, he claims with good reason, is going badly. Violence, crime, war, domestic conflict and misery are ever more conspicuous features of our world. The demand for a remedy is naturally made. But what kind of remedy? Trying to make men better Skinner believes to be a waste of time. Men, he claims, are shaped by their environment. Hence the way to improve the life of man on earth is to alter the environment in which men live. The idea that men do things because they choose to do them, Skinner dismisses as a delusion. Free will he regards as false. He is a thorough determinist—indeed one of the very few determinists left in the present day and age, when positivists evade the problem of free will by calling it a pseudo-problem, and even Marxists reject determinism in its hard nineteenth-century form in favour of a looser doctrine of historical causation.

Skinner, whether he is right or wrong, is at any rate unambiguous. He says that men's behaviour is 'shaped and maintained by its consequences'[2]; this means that it is effectively determined by the environment; and the environment can be controlled. Skinner claims that his laboratory experiments on rats and pigeons give empirical support to this conclusion. Put men in a certain situation, and you can predict how they will react to it. It is this knowledge of how men react to their environment that Skinner invokes to justify his plea for environmental reconstruction.

'. . . if planned economies, benevolent dictatorships, perfectionist societies, and other utopian ventures have failed', Skinner writes,[3] 'we must remember that unplanned, undictated, and unperfected cultures have failed too. A failure is not always a mistake; it may simply be the

[2] op. cit. p. 18.
[3] op. cit. pp. 155–56.

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best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying.'

So Skinner is not to be deterred by the word 'utopian' being applied to his theory; nor, again, is he deterred by the kind of criticism which is commonly addressed to utopian thinkers, namely, that their ideal societies are invariably divided into two classes of leaders and led. Skinner expects the future society to be just so divided: he writes with his characteristic frankness: 'the control of the population as a whole must be delegated to specialists'.[4]

How are these specialists to work? Not, as political leaders are expected to do in the advanced societies of the real world, by means of rational persuasion. For Skinner does not believe in the rationality of the populace, and what is commonly called 'persuasion' he regards as a 'weak' form of reinforcement, a form so weak as to be, more often than not, ineffective. What he believes to be needed are stronger forms of reinforcement, which specialists will know how to use, and which 'behavioural technology', as Skinner calls it, already understands in general terms.

This word 'reinforcement', which Skinner uses a great deal throughout this book, is his present way of speaking of what earlier behaviourists used to call 'stimulus'. If the environment favours, rewards or provokes a certain type of behaviour it 'reinforces' it positively: if it serves to diminish or discourage or prevent a certain type of behaviour, it acts as a negative reinforcement, it is 'aversive'. Thus, in Skinner's language, what is needed is an environment which reinforces social or good behaviour positively and is aversive towards anti-social or bad behaviour. Mere praise and blame, or 'informal ethical control', Skinner considers inadequate as reinforcers, just as persuasion is ineffective.

What then does a more effective technology prescribe? For one thing, says Skinner, it points to a kind of world which the people who live in the present world would not like. 'The problem', he says, 'is to design a world which will be liked not by people as they are now but by those who live in it [i.e. the changed world]'.[5] People as they are now like the status quo because they have been conditioned to like it; people who live in a different environment will have other preferences.

Skinner plainly regards a preference for the values of freedom and human dignity as outmoded: 'Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are basic rights. But they are the rights of the individual and were listed as such at a time when the literatures of freedom and dignity were concerned with the aggrandizement of the individual. They have only a minor bearing on the survival of a culture.'[6]

This somewhat Darwinian value of survival is for Skinner of paramount importance: and no doubt he would claim that in giving such priority to survival, he is acting in accord with nature herself. Indeed, he does make this claim in at least one passage:

'The designer of a culture is not an interloper or meddler. He does not step in to disturb a natural process, he is part of a natural process.

[4] op. cit. p. 155.
[5] op. cit. p. 164.
[6] op. cit. p. 180.

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The geneticist who changes the characteristics of a species by selective breeding or by changing genes may seem to be meddling in biological evolution, but he does so because his species has evolved to the point at which it has been able to develop a science of genetics and a culture which induces its members to take the future of a species into account.' [7]

Skinner goes on to suggest that the survival of our culture is currently at hazard, precisely because our attachment to the outmoded values of liberty and human dignity is putting a brake on the use of scientific controls:

'Our culture has produced the science and technology it needs to save itself. It has the wealth needed for effective action. It has to a considerable extent, a concern for its own future. But if it continues to take freedom or dignity, rather than its own survival, as its principal value, then it is possible that some other culture will make a greater contribution to the future.' [8]

Where Skinner differs from Bacon and Holbach is precisely in his confidence that the science and technology needed to save us are *already available*; the prophets of the Age of Reason believed that that science had yet to be instituted. It follows that our trouble, as Skinner sees it, is due to a defect of will and not a lack of knowledge. We have the know-how. Why do we not use it? Or rather, since Skinner's method permits only one formulation of this question, we must ask: What characteristics of the environment reinforce men's acting against their best interest? And how can different factors be introduced into the environment so as to stimulate more constructive action?

THIS boils down essentially to a political question: and on this level Skinner is less clear than Bacon. Bacon maintained that the environment could be changed if the king had absolute powers to change it. Skinner has no king to give absolute powers to. He speaks of 'specialists' and 'scientists', but such persons have no constitutional status. Even if the mass of men did turn to the scientists and specialists, and beg these experts to deliver them, such experts would have no political authority. They would need some kind of political sponsors to empower them. Of course, we can imagine, as Plato did, a different kind of world, where experts were in command. But Skinner shrinks from such idealist conjectures, without offering any alternatives.

To the question what political changes his type of social engineering demands, Skinner really offers no answer at all, although he gives a hint now and again that he would like to see a hardening of the existing institutions of authority, and the use of that authority to impose on the population—an unwilling population in all likelihood—the decisions of the specialists. It may be that changes along such lines could be brought about more readily than some of us would wish. In most Western countries, France, America and Great Britain no less than others, the power of the executive has tended in recent years to prevail more and more over the power of parliament or other legislative bodies. Functionaries and back-room experts such as Kissinger and Rueff are already becoming more influential than elected politicians: so it may well be

[7] op. cit. p. 180.
[8] op. cit. p. 181.

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that the constitutional procedures of so-called democratic states could be used for Skinner's purposes without any radical formal transformation. In socialist states, where the bureaucracy is already dominant, Skinner's policy could be adopted without any constitutional change whatever. In fact, although Skinner's political sentiments appear to be right-wing—he speaks, for example, of his specialists (to whom 'control must be delegated') in very conservative terms as 'police, priests, owners, teachers, therapists, and so on',[9] there is a marked affinity between his whole approach and that of Eastern European totalitarian socialism.

At all events, I do not think one can fairly castigate Skinner's proposals as 'utopian' in the sense of 'unrealistic'. They are utopian in the sense that they call for a radical transformation of society through the government by intellectuals and the sustained practice of social engineering in place of free political discussion. But there is nothing impracticable about his proposals. Skinner's style of government may be much nearer than even he dares hope.

SKINNER, as I have said, is a systematic thinker. All he has to say fits together. It is no good trying to find fault with him on this small point or that. Either his case holds up all together, or it falls down all together. I myself believe it falls. I believe it is wrong from the very beginning. Man is not a machine. Human experience is not wholly explicable in terms of observable movements. It is a crude dogma of behaviourist theory that man has no free choice, no inwardness or mind. If men *were* machines, they would assuredly be fools to fancy themselves possessed of dignity and rights. But since they are not machines, but unique beings, with consciousness and rationality and moral will, they are fully justified in setting such store by freedom and dignity, and in rating those values even above the value of survival.

The rats and pigeons that Skinner studies in his laboratory at Harvard may well be like machines. But that only means that Skinner can learn very little about men from his work on rats and pigeons. His psychology may be exact, but it is also a very narrow discipline. It affords him very inadequate grounds for venturing into the fields of politics and social reform. Indeed, the assumption that man is a kind of super-rat is almost bound to lead to an impatient demand for more efficient and more ruthless control of the super-rat, especially when that creature seems bent (as he often does in the present era) on self-destruction.

On the other hand, Skinner is surely wrong in supposing that man's attachment to the values of liberty, dignity and human rights is a major cause of their present peril: for it is one characteristic of the present situation that the enjoyment of rights, freedom and dignity is diminishing in the world at roughly the same pace as man's security, or expectation of survival. Many a moralist before Skinner has said: 'Imitate Athens and perish or imitate Sparta and survive.' But history does not bear this doctrine out. The societies which have taken Athens as a model have generally lasted longer than those which have tried to copy Sparta. Freedom seems to offer more security than despotism; and if the

[9] op. cit. p. 155.

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'survival of the fittest' is really an iron law of evolution, then men who care for liberty and rights and human dignity are evidently fitter, in the eyes of evolution, than those who don't.

Knowing humans

THIS book[5] is an attempt to defend a modified form of empiricist political science, notably against criticisms stemming from the radical left. The enterprise must be considered only partially successful. Professor Kaplan argues effectively against the radical objections, but he does not rescue empiricist political science from other, and more substantial, criticisms.

To take first a question which Kaplan treats towards the end of his book: 'Is social science value-free?' Kaplan wants to say that it is, and to rebut the radical assertion that it cannot be. The point that Kaplan takes up from the radicals is their assertion that all social science is ideologically slanted or biased. He does not have much difficulty in showing that this is a self-refuting theory. For if all knowledge is distorted, the knowledge that knowledge is distorted is itself distorted. It will be remembered that Karl Mannheim modified his claim that all knowledge is ideologically distorted by suggesting that undistorted knowledge was accessible to a classless class of intellectuals, but this Platonic fantasy is unacceptable to the egalitarian radicals of the present day, so they are left with their paradox unresolved.

What Kaplan fails to consider is the more serious argument that nearly all statements about social and political experience are impregnated with judgments, not of an ideological, but of a simple evaluative kind. The words which are central to our political discourses—words like 'peace', 'justice', 'rights', 'interest', 'liberty'—are words which are at the same time descriptive (or 'empirical') *and* evaluative (or 'normative'). To discuss politics without invoking value judgments we should need an artificial language: but such an artificial language would be unable to describe the realities of politics. The field of politics, like that of law, is a field in which many questions of fact and questions of value are inseparable: and even the academic process of analysis, or 'breaking down', involves the risk of destroying the real sense of what is being talked about.

Kaplan is well known as a practitioner of 'systems analysis' of politics; and he makes one important point in this connexion: 'all scientific models, whether biological or physical, are necessarily closed and complete; and all existential worlds, including even those of physics, are necessarily open and inexhaustible.' This is a remark that deserves some thought. It is even arguable that those sciences which lavish the most concern on 'models' are the furthest removed from the existential reality. To claim for economics, for example, the status of a sophisticated mathematical science is not to claim that economics has anything seriously to do with events in the external world. As economics has improved itself as a theoretical science it has become virtually useless as an applied science. A few months ago one half of the economics

[5] Morton A. Kaplan: *On Historical and Political Knowing* (Chicago University Press).

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professors in Great Britain declared that adhesion to the Common Market would be advantageous for the British, the other half declared that it would be disadvantageous: their joint statement might well be taken as final proof that economics theory has no light to throw on practical economic problems.

Perhaps no one other than the most naive ever believed that sociology would help us deal with social problems: but Professor Kaplan still seems to want to say that political science can help us solve political problems. It is not, however, altogether clear from his book what kind of help he expects it to yield. In the first place, he has himself a very mature practical understanding of politics, and this makes him sharply critical of what he calls politely 'the overtly simple models' (what the rest of us would call the sheer unworldliness) of politicians like Fulbright, who think that aid to Soviet bloc countries, for example, will buy friendship. Kaplan points to the facts of the matter, and recalls that those communist countries which turned most against the Soviet Union were those which received least aid from the USA. Where Kaplan disappoints his readers is in his failure to show that a more elaborately constructed model than Fulbright's would enable one to gain any better practical understanding of politics. Kaplan's own understanding is clearly derived from his study of the real world. His theoretical models take this knowledge into account, but they do not contribute anything to that knowledge.

Kaplan has a well-argued chapter on freedom. Again he wants to do what all empiricists since Hobbes have tried to do—to reconcile freedom with determinism. He clings to the belief that our explanations of human behaviour should usually, though not always, be deterministic, and that historical explanation needs to be done with the aid of laws or law-like generalizations. But he believes men are free: 'their freedom lies,' he writes, 'not in their ability to overflow the boundaries of deterministic explanatory categorization, but rather in their ability to express themselves as the kind of beings they are, that is, as moral beings.'

The short answer to this is that 'deterministic explanatory categorization' cannot logically serve to explain the deeds of a 'moral being', namely one who is by definition free. Morality makes no sense if applied to beings who do not choose. The deeds of a free and undetermined being may be explained in many different ways: but they cannot logically be explained as the deeds of a determined being.

Professor Kaplan writes: 'Individual freedoms exist, but they are relative and constrained by necessities.' This is very true. But remarks of this kind bear upon the problem of social and political liberty and not the problem of the freedom of the will. As Locke pointed out, our (political) freedom is never absolute: some men are free in more numerous, and more valuable respects than others; and Locke thought it desirable to help to get the best possible freedom for everyone by diminishing institutional constraints. As for the freedom of the will, Locke refused to talk about it: he considered it a bogus metaphysical abstraction. Professor Kaplan seems sometimes to share this feeling of Locke's: at others to take the problem of freewill *versus* determinism seriously enough to try to resolve it. But the problem defeats him, as it has defeated innumerable earlier philosophers.

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Nicola Chiaromonte

Gino Bianco

MUCH could be said about the 'libertarian enlightenment' of Nicola Chiaromonte, who died in Rome on 18 January 1972, and about the need he felt, in the face of the moral disintegration of European society and the advent of totalitarianisms, to put up a firm resistance thereto in the name of reason and humanity.

An enemy of Mussolini's dictatorship, he spent his youth in exile in Paris and New York after fighting on the republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Born in Rapolla, in 1905, he witnessed fascism, the second world war, communism, in fact all the political and intellectual vicissitudes of Europe in the past 50 years. Thus the lesson of liberty that Chiaromonte leaves us is that of an intellectual for whom civil involvement was never divorced from belief in the virtues of reflection, reticence and truth. His judgment on the world in which we live and on the role of the intellectual in it was very clearly expressed in one of his last writings: 'Ours is not an age of faith, but neither is it an age of unbelief. It is an age of bad faith, of beliefs maintained by force, in opposition to other beliefs, and above all in the absence of other genuine beliefs. . . . Yet the only language between men is that which can be woven around the web of genuinely shared beliefs, inasmuch as they constitute the premise and foundation of every discourse, and not a pre-established scheme or a collection of dogmas.' This reflection contains, as *L'Espresso* said, his *carte d'identité* and his epigraph.

As a militant anti-fascist in Paris in the 1930s, first in the ranks of the 'Giustizia et Libertà' movement and then of the Italian socialists, Chiaromonte had made friends with a man of extraordinary culture and refinement, Andrea Caffi, a revolutionary in Tsarist Russia, a university student in Berlin, and a subversive intellectual in Paris between the two wars. His meeting with Caffi was decisive in Chiaromonte's development, and in his contributions to the *Quaderni* and the weekly paper of Giustizia e Libertà he went beyond the ordinary superficialities in his criticism of contemporary totalitarianism and the mass society, bringing back his analysis to more complex phenomena and in the first place to the crisis of European civilization.

Intolerant of the oversimplified aspects of the 'anti-fascist' ideologies, Chiaromonte insisted on the fact that the war, the post-war situation, and the world crisis had profoundly modified two essential factors of modern society: 'the structure of the State (which implies also the relationship between economics and politics), and the composition, as well as the possibility of collective action, of the working class'. This conviction and the consciousness of a crisis which was shaking European society, extending also to cultural values, was particularly strong in Caffi and Chiaromonte. At a time when many socialist intellectuals and politicians had abdicated in face of the Soviet myth,

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Chiaromonte was among the few who saw that the USSR was not 'a counterpoise to the regimes of capitalist reaction that we are enduring in many European and American countries, but an element of this reactionary constellation, sustaining itself within it and by it'.

To the misconceptions entertained at that time, if in all honesty, by such people as Otto Bauer, Karl Kautsky, Pietro Nenni, the Webbs, G. D. H. Cole, and many others, Chiaromonte opposed a clear vision of the relationship between the Soviet regime and the communist parties on the one hand, and the socialist and libertarian tradition on the other. In his article on 'The Marx-Lenin-Stalin line or the betrayal of office', published in the weekly *Giustizia e Libertà* (No. 3, May 1935), Chiaromonte denounced the degeneration of the Soviet revolution and the new brand of autocracy represented by Stalinism. The year 1934 had witnessed the right-wing demonstrations of 6 February in Paris, the Dollfuss murder in Austria, the revolt in the Asturias, the strengthening of Hitler's power, and the consolidation of the fascist regimes in half of Eastern Europe. But the bureaucrats of the Third International did not renounce their regulation optimism according to which the whole proletariat was 'on foot in compact ranks'. 'The cretinism denounced by Stalin', Chiaromonte observed, 'has quite clearly moved from the militarily occupied Parliaments to the offices where, between diagrams and formulas, the clerks of the revolution vegetate. But it is not so much cretinism, not so much unawareness, as the epilogue of a betrayal that is being accomplished by means of hierarchy.' Nor did he spare his criticisms of the communist movement and the anti-fascist parties, but these criticisms were dictated by the desire to contribute in a positive way to the renewal of the socialist and libertarian tradition.

When the civil war broke out in Spain, Chiaromonte enrolled among the volunteers and fought in the squadron organized by André Malraux, who in his book *L'Espoir* describes his meeting with the young anti-fascist. In Spain he saw, as he wrote in a letter from Madrid, 'all the efforts of the "politicals" converge towards the separation of the revolution from the war so as to postpone all social claims to better times'. The farce of non-intervention organized by the British Conservatives and imposed on France by the Popular Front, the conflicts between communists and anarchists, the tragedy of May 1937 in Barcelona when the military secret police controlled by the communists attacked by force the anarchists, Trotskyists, and members of the POUM, confirmed in his mind, as he wrote to Caffi, 'the absurdity and incongruity of every "political" movement in the present situation. The inanity of every "parti pris" should finally impose itself on people's minds, and this is above all, I believe, profoundly felt by the popular masses in Spain'. But the tragedy of Spain was already moving towards its fatal conclusion. Politics, so he wrote later, no longer had any meaning, or—to put it better—had acquired that inhuman senselessness which Europe was soon to experience in even more extreme forms. After the German invasion of France, Chiaromonte, in danger of arrest, escaped from

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Paris and managed by adventurous ways to reach North Africa. There he met Albert Camus, with whom he formed a friendship that was to last until the great French writer's death. From North Africa he went to the United States, where he joined in the activities of the radical left-wing American groups, contributing to such reviews as *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, and above all *Politics*. The story of these years and of the influence exercised by Chiaromonte in the circles around *Politics* is told in Dwight Macdonald's *The Responsibility of People* (1957). More recently, Mary McCarthy, speaking of the intellectual climate in New York in those days, wrote that Chiaromonte brought into the intellectual circles of the American Left 'something of Europe: a Europe different not only from America, but also from that other Europe which we had known till then only through Proust and Gide, the conventional Europe. Chiaromonte brought us more radical ideas and gave us the background, or rather the philosophical basis of politics. With him we went back over all the stages of political theory, from Trotskyism to Marxism, going even further back to Proudhon and the utopians of the eighteenth century'.

IN his writings Chiaromonte deals with the relationship between politics and society, Marxism, mass culture, and the function of the intellectual in the modern world, and one is constantly aware of his effort to delve more deeply, to show the cracks beneath the so-called 'systems' of philosophy and sociology. There was in him, above all, the conviction that 'human society constitutes an ever-present, ever-resurgent problem, which may or may not have a final solution, but which in any case demands to be kept open through all the vicissitudes of history', and the need to set on foot a serious re-examination of ideas and of the present-day state of affairs. This is the same impulse that lay behind the programme of *Tempo Presente*, the review he founded in the 1950s with Ignazio Silone: 'To promote the re-examination of current ways of thinking, putting them in confrontation with the present-day world.' Famous foreign and Italian writers contributed to the review, and Chiaromonte himself often wrote notes on political or cultural matters as well as essays on historical and literary criticism. These essays (on Tolstoy, Roger Martin du Gard, Stendhal, Pasternak and Malraux, subsequently collected in a volume under the title *The Paradox of History*, London, 1971) are united by a central idea: the relationship between man and the historical event, between what man believes and what happens to him. The single theme is the conflict between the individual world and the historical world, in other words the problem of the relation between men and historical happenings. Only a few people, as has rightly been observed, 'perceived that there was an experiment in existential and direct history at work beneath these literary essays'. For this book was born not out of reflection on the problem of history in and for itself, but more specifically, as Chiaromonte pointed out in his introduction,

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> from a question that I had asked myself for years, in the course of my reading and discussions with friends, about the fate of European socialism: why was it that the socialist movement, which had undoubtedly represented the most vigorous and intellectually rich attempt to promote the cause of justice and equality in Europe, was thrown into such disarray by the outbreak of the first world war that it never managed afterwards to reconstitute itself in a politically effective and ideologically convincing way? How can an idea be defeated by an event? Yet socialism was certainly defeated because it did not succeed in putting up any valid opposition to the war. The flagrant proof of this defeat is the victory of Bolshevism. There were in fact two main reasons for the victory of Bolshevism in Russia and the prestige it had acquired in Western Europe: first, the consistency with which its leaders had opposed the war, and secondly, and no less importantly, the implacable refusal to admit any form whatever of democracy in the regime they set up. Rosa Luxemburg saw this at once and denounced it very clearly.

In his last years Chiaromonte was also the dramatic critic of *Il Mondo*, and his notes on the theatre (which he considered to be 'like society looking at itself, and like the encounter between every man and his destiny') reveal an intimate link with the human and intellectual development of their author. For the real theme of his writings on the theatre, whether on Brechtian methods, realism on the stage, or Sartre's political plays, was the crisis of contemporary culture, and the negative influence exercised on it by dogmatism and the ideological schools, 'the absence of the values of order, form and rationality'.

He became increasingly detached from politics, but he did not cease, in Thomas Mann's words, to 'look it in the eyes'. The renewed repression of intellectual life in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and the violent explosion of the so-called 'New Left' (in which he saw alarming traces of nihilism and barbarism) inspired some of his best essays. 'In the countries of the East', he wrote, 'contestation is really global, and is concerned not with privileges of class or corporation but with the actual form of associated life.' As for the new radicalism,

> in the final analysis it is the cult of power and violence that is being diffused under the cloak of the New Left. And, with this, the circle of the involution of the European Left, begun in 1914, closes. For it was as a revolt against power and violence that the liberal, democratic and socialist 'Left' was born in Europe. Even though it always had within it a certain romantic cult of violent action, the libertarian and socialist movement of the last century always remained at bottom peaceful and pacifist. But the second world war (not to mention what had preceded it in Russia and elsewhere) let loose not only the Hitlerian bestiality but also, everywhere and in everyone (except for a small minority), the 'realistic' conviction that nothing in history is to be obtained without violence, and, conversely, that with well-organized violence everything can be obtained.

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It would be too easy to speak of 'disillusionment' or 'pessimism'. This is something different and more complex—'the reasoned conviction that culture, understood as the intransigent assertion of the values of liberty and justice' is becoming increasingly more impracticable. Nevertheless, Chiaromonte added, the solution of the crisis of our age 'cannot be provided by any one individual in particular, but must emerge from the life of all, and must first be lived before being formulated; and it may even happen that it is emerging without our being aware of it'.

Political Fanaticism in an Age of Doubt

Nicola Chiaromonte*

'IT is not laziness, want of purpose, or clumsiness that causes me to fail in everything', Kafka wrote in his *Diaries*, 'but the lack of ground under one's feet, of air, of law.' And he added: 'My task is to create these things for myself.'

As we know, so far as literature is concerned, Kafka did not fail. But we also know (or ought to know) that for a real writer—that is to say, for a man who cannot content himself with fictions—no literary success can make up for 'the lack of ground under one's feet, of air, of law', because these are things that concern not just everyday existence, the occasional fortunes and misfortunes of the individual, but the relationship between the conscience and the world and, more simply, the question of whether what one does and thinks day by day has or has not any sense and aim.

And, as far as that question is concerned, we also know (or ought to know) that 'the ground under one's feet', 'air', and 'law', in the sense in which Kafka understood them, as the ultimate foundations of living, are not things that the individual can create for himself: they are dependent on all of us in general and on no one in particular, on the actual state of affairs, on what happened in the past, and, in the last analysis, on one doesn't know what: not, certainly, on what is usually called History, claiming to know what it is, what its laws are, what point it has reached and where it is leading.

Kafka was therefore ingenuous, and was yielding to a reverential fear of a non-existent and impossible duty (in which, moreover, all his work testifies that he never really believed), when he set himself the task of

* From *La Stampa* (28 December 1968).

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'creating' for himself and by himself these moral realities. The only thing he could do was to suffer their absence; and, naturally, within that suffering was not only implicit but incarnate the aspiration towards a different condition—a condition of stability and peace, of being at last admitted to go beyond the threshold of that door of which he speaks in one of his finest fables, before which a stranger languishes right into old age, believing it forbidden, only to learn at last from the impassive guardian that the way in had always been open and was indeed reserved precisely for him.

A few years after Kafka's death and the publication of *The Castle* in 1929, a philosopher compatriot of his and like him a Jew by birth, Edmund Husserl, opened one of his most important works, *Formal Logic and Transcendental Logic*, with the following reflections:

> The present situation of the sciences in Europe compels us to take radical account of certain facts. The sciences have, in fact, lost their great faith in themselves and in their absolute meaning. Modern man today, unlike 'modern' man in the age of enlightenment, does not see in science and in the new culture moulded by science the objectivization of reason or the universal function that mankind has sought in order to make possible a life in which he can be fully satisfied, a life, that is to say, whether individual or social, which is dictated by practical reason.
>
> This great belief—which replaced religious beliefs—that science leads to wisdom, to a knowledge of oneself, to a truly rational knowledge of the world and of God, and therefore to a life based on happiness, satisfaction and well-being, a life which, though still to be modelled in an ever more perfect way, is really worthy of being lived—this belief has lost its force among wide circles of people. Thus one lives in a world that has become incomprehensible, a world in which one asks oneself in vain, 'What is it for?', a world in which one seeks in vain for the meaning that was once beyond all doubt, since it was recognized both by the intellect and by the will.

We will not go into this in detail. We will confine ourselves to remarking that, formulated from two very different points of view (Kafka's subjective, Husserl's purely objective), these two commentaries are among the clearest and calmest ever enunciated concerning that 'crisis of the European conscience' which has been talked about for at least the last 50 years, and which is still being discussed, for the good reason that, far from being resolved, the crisis has merely become deeper and wider. We would also observe that, as far as Husserl is concerned, all his philosophical research, from 1900 to 1938, is a great and scrupulous attempt to reaffirm the value of truth in a culture undermined by relativism on two principal points: first, the idea that truth can be a matter of psychology; and secondly, that it can be found in the sphere of history and historical action, or can be '*filia temporis*' and vary according to varying occasions.

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Finally, we note that, both with Kafka and with Husserl, it is not a question of politics but of something that comes before politics, and in fact of something relating not to action but to thought, the question of truth and of the meaning of life.

NOW, if we consider what has happened both in the sphere of culture and of corporate life between the 1920s and today, but more especially after the second world war, we see that while this question, with the doubt and negation it implies, visibly corrodes both the work and the behaviour of individuals, it assumes at the same time a form even more abnormal than it is paradoxical, which could be defined as 'relativist fanaticism', or 'fanatical unbelief'. Doubt, in fact, takes the form of violent assertion. The doubt is concerned with the meaning of existence; the fanaticism and violence (intellectual rather than physical) with political action. There are no longer absolutes of any kind, but politics is an incontestable absolute.

An outstanding example of this paradox, virtually amounting to mental dissociation, is to be found in one of the most eminent *maîtres à penser* of our times, Jean-Paul Sartre. On the one hand, in his philosophical work and in his autobiography Sartre insists on a moral philosophy of integral atheism which is also a philosophy of *glissement*, of freely sliding from project to project, from action to action, without giving any thought to continuity (because that would mean in some way restoring a transcendent and judging God). But on the other hand, in his ideological and political pronouncements he shows himself to be fanatical in the extreme and intolerant of any criticism, as if he constituted on his own a sort of ultra-totalitarian party based on the proposition that 'Marxism is the insuperable philosophy of our times'.

A singular proposition, and one which is self-destructive, like one of those curious mechanical structures invented by the sculptor Tingely. For to make Marxism—which, however you regard it, is a system of thought—into a compact and immovable object, a wall, a threshold beyond which (as in Kafka's fable) it is forbidden to pass, signifies not only making it the opposite of a philosophy—a dogma—but also depriving it of any value of its own. It is not, in fact, Marx that is transformed into an idol in such a dictum, but politics: political action, converted into a categorical imperative. Thus it is no longer a question of philosophy or politics but of ethics: one is not an ethical man unless one follows in practice a political line which can be called 'Marxist', that is to say anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and so forth.

The consequence is absurd, but the fanaticism remains; and it is, as has been said, a relativist fanaticism, a fanaticism believed in as long as it is a question of 'contesting' the real or supposed adversary, but which is itself lacking in foundation and also, if this has to come into it, in effectiveness. For it is not a question of political thought but of an extreme form of morality which in turn translates itself (though we do not say that Sartre himself goes so far: he merely represents an

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example of a widespread mentality today) into a sort of totalitarian protest according to which unless the absolute is realised nothing is accomplished.

Now it seems obvious that a political action inspired in this way is by its very nature incapable of achieving the reform of a society: it cannot even subvert, since, appearances notwithstanding, it has nothing in common with the revolutionary tradition to which it claims relationship; instead, it may in the long run provoke that organic and almost animal reaction which leads to the establishment of enforced disciplines. It is from reasonable doubt, not from dogma, that new liberating ideas are born.

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Single Issue: £1·25 or $3 Annual Subscription: £4 or $10

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Philip E. Mosely

Elizabeth Valkenier

PHILIP E. MOSELY died in New York City on 13 January 1972, at the age of 66. It was an untimely death for a dedicated and revered teacher, a compassionate and generous human being, and a noted scholar. He was endowed with so many remarkable qualities and accomplished so much in his lifetime that the imprint of his keen mind, wide-ranging knowledge, and warm personality lives on in many fields of scholarly and practical endeavour and in the lives of many people.

The year-by-year facts of his academic, diplomatic and organizational activities hardly convey the scope of his achievement. He was unique among his generation of American specialists in Russian and East European affairs, not only in his fluent command of the languages and sympathetic understanding of the cultures of that part of the world, but also in his intimate familiarity with the realities of daily life there. Already before entering Harvard in 1922, he had taught himself Czech and Russian; during the difficult years 1930–32, he chose to do historical research in the archives in Moscow; in the late 1930s he branched out from his original discipline, diplomatic history, to do ethnographic and sociological field work in the peasant villages of the Balkans. He brought this many-faceted training in the social sciences to his work as one of the principal architects of area studies in the United States right after the second world war.

During that war Philip Mosely served in the US Department of State, directing an intensive programme of planning for the post-war settlement. He also participated as an adviser at numerous conferences—notably those at Moscow in 1943 and at Potsdam in 1945—and in negotiations on the future of Austria and Germany and the settlement of the Italian-Yugoslav border dispute. Some of the insights he gained in those meetings were set down in his article, often quoted and reprinted, ' Negotiating with the Russians '.

It was characteristic of Mosely that he not only contributed to shaping the formal, diplomatic side of the post-war settlement but also became deeply involved in alleviating the lot of Soviet and East European intellectuals who found themselves in the West after the war. He was instrumental in setting up the East European Fund, the Research Programme on the USSR, and the Chekhov Publishing House, which enabled many to carry on their scholarly work, to publish memoirs or to continue their studies in Western universities.

To the community of Soviet experts and Slavic scholars he rendered invaluable service by helping to set up the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies, the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, the valuable project on the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Menshevik history series, and the extensive Russian Archive at Columbia University.

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His own publications in the field are not as numerous as he would have wished.[1] A wholly committed teacher, whose students always came first in his busy professional life, Mosely was continually postponing his own major writing until his retirement. Meanwhile, this selflessly generous man was prodigal in giving ideas and guidance to others, stimulating them to write, finding financial support for them, and often personally editing their works. So much of his own achievement is reflected in the publications of others: how often one comes across heartfelt expressions of gratitude to Philip E. Mosely in the prefaces to significant studies on history, diplomacy and literature, whether Russian, Soviet, East European or Western.

He was long associated with the Council on Foreign Relations, first as a member of various ad hoc study groups from 1939 on, and then as its Director of Studies, 1955–63. There he initiated a number of pioneering works. To mention only a few—an early analysis of the course of Sino-Soviet relations prognosticated the subsequent split; another book on Soviet aid and trade with the developing countries examined the economic motives and gains of the USSR at a time when public and scholarly attention was focused on the political and ideological drive; a series of books on the United States and China re-opened informed and realistic discussion of relations between the two countries.

Perhaps most enduringly Philip Mosely will be remembered as the teacher of several generations of American students, professors, journalists and diplomats. He taught at Princeton and Cornell Universities before coming to Columbia in 1946 to help found the Russian Institute, whose Director he became five years later. At the time of his death, he was Director of Columbia's European Institute.

His numerous students benefited richly no less from his teaching than from the kind personal attention he gave them and his interest in their careers. Above all, he gave them the dispassionate, in-depth perspective on the Communist world which could only come from years of patient study, rigorous thinking, and empathetic understanding. One further tribute to the quality of his mind and heart should be noted: he had the respect and the trust not only of those who knew him in the West but of the Soviets as well. They speak with the same admiration and warmth of 'Filip Arturovich' as Americans speak of 'Phil'.

[1] *Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Eastern Question* (1934), and *The Kremlin and World Politics* (1960), a collection of 25 of his articles. Numerous other articles and studies of American foreign policy and of Russian and Balkan history and domestic politics are scattered in scholarly journals and symposia.

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The Case of Valentin Moroz

Valentin Moroz was made Amnesty International's 'Prisoner of the Month' in August 1971. He was born in 1934 in Wolhynia. He taught Modern History at the Lesia Ukrainka Pedagogical Institute in Ivano-Frankovsk. In August 1965 he and 30 other Ukrainian intellectuals were arrested on suspicion of encouraging nationalistic views and of being opposed to Soviet policy in the Ukraine. He served four years' hard labour in the Mordovian ASSR, 500 kilometres south-east of Moscow. Released on 1 September 1969, Valentin Moroz was soon arrested again and sentenced in November 1970 to six years' imprisonment, three years of hard labour in a special strict regime camp and five years of exile. The proceedings were not public. A punishment of such extreme severity makes the case of Valentin Moroz comparable to that of Vladimir Bukovsky.

Valentin Moroz' Defence Speech

I will not quote the criminal code to prove my innocence. We are not charged here because we have committed any kind of crime, as the court well knows. We are in the dock because of the role we play in developments which are undesirable to you. There are people for whose arrest there are more formal legal grounds than in my own case. But it suits you to let them stay free because they lower the tone of the Ukrainian renaissance, arrest its development, while they themselves do not understand this. You will never do anything against these people, and if by chance they should fall into your hands, you would immediately take care to set them free. You came to the conclusion that Valentin Moroz raises the temperature of the processes taking place in the Ukraine, processes which you dislike, and therefore he must be separated from his environment by prison bars. Well, this would be quite logical, if there were not a 'but' here. . . .

Since 1965, you have put several dozen people behind bars. What have you achieved by doing this? I shall not speak here of a trend, though no one has succeeded in stopping it. Have you at least been successful in liquidating its concrete, material expressions? Have you, for example, stopped the stream of non-official literature which avoids censorship and is called *samizdat*? No, you are too weak to do that. *Samizdat* is growing, is becoming richer and richer in form and direction, authors and new readers. And, what is more important, the roots reach so deeply that nothing more can be achieved with an increase of spies

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or the assistance of Japanese eavesdropping sets. Your acts of force have led to nothing, and what you are doing could be called in Russian 'Martishkin's work' [useless work]. But the problem lies elsewhere: one cannot expect that anything useful would come out of 'Martishkin's work'. You have certainly already produced visible consequences, which are exactly the opposite of what you expected. You wanted to put out the fire; instead you have thrown fuel on the flames. Nothing has contributed so much to intensifying political life in the Ukraine as your repression. Nothing has attracted so much attention to the Ukrainian renaissance as your trials. In fact, precisely these trials have shown to the public at large that political life in the Ukraine has come alive again. You wanted to hide the people in the woods of Mordovia, but instead you have put them in a huge arena where they are visible to the whole world. The majority of the activists in the Ukrainian renaissance became so as a direct consequence of your repression. In short, it is about time that you finally comprehend: repression hurts you above all. Nonetheless, you bring more and more people to trial. Why? To fulfil the plan? To assuage your bureaucratic conscience? Or to work off your rage? Really, it's out of sheer lethargy.

You have contributed the very thing to the Ukrainian renaissance in the post-Stalinist era without which it would never have matured: the element of a willingness to sacrifice. Belief does not arise until there are martyrs; you have given them to us.

Whenever something alive appears on the Ukrainian horizon you have always pelted it with stones. And it has always turned out that, in fact, the stones were boomerangs. They came back and hit—you, yourselves! What happened? Why don't the repressions have any effect any more? Why did the time-tested weapons turn into boomerangs? Times have changed, that is my answer. Stalin had enough water to put out the fire. But you are in a completely different situation. You live in a time when your possibilities have been exhausted. If one has little water, it's better not to sprinkle it on the fire, otherwise it just burns all the better—every child knows that. You tried to stamp out the fire and only succeeded in fanning the flames. You haven't the strength to do more. That means that the social organism in which we live has entered a phase of development in which the effect of repression is counter-productive. Each new repression becomes therefore a new boomerang.

On 1 June, you put me behind bars, and thereby let loose another boomerang. You have already seen the consequences. Five years ago you put me on the stand, and an arrow was shot at you from there. You put me behind the barbed wire in Mordovia, and a bomb was thrown at you from there. Now you are beginning all over again from the beginning without having understood or learnt anything. But this time the boomerang will hit you much harder. In 1965 Moroz was only an unknown history teacher. Now he is known . . . and now Moroz slurps his cabbage soup in prison.

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We ask ourselves in Yiddish: 'What will you get out of it?' The only Moroz who could really be of any use to you would be a bowing and scraping Moroz who had signed a recantation. That would be a blow to all thinking Ukrainians. But you can wait for ever for such a Moroz. If you think you will create a vacuum in the Ukrainian renaissance by putting me behind bars, you are wrong. Understand once and for all: there will never again be a vacuum. The strength of the spiritual potential of the Ukraine is already sufficient to fill any vacuum, however great, and to give to political life active new members, as much for you who sit in prison as for those who have returned to social activity. The 1960s brought an unmistakable revival in Ukrainian life. Nor will the '70s be a vacuum in Ukrainian history. The golden age when every life was forced into the official mould is gone beyond recall. Now there exists culture outside the Ministry of Culture and philosophy outside the journal *Voprosy Filosofii* [*Questions of Philosophy*]. Now phenomena exist, which came into the world without official permission, and with every year the current becomes stronger.

I will now be tried behind closed doors. But that will also become a boomerang, when no one can hear me, when I must be silent in a cell in the Vladimir prison, cut off from the outside world. There is a sort of silence which is louder than a cry. And even if you destroy me, you will not be able to stifle it. To destroy someone is easy. But have you ever thought about this: that a victim can sometimes mean more than a survivor? The victims will inspire the living.

I know very well what you will say: 'Moroz thinks much too much about himself.' But this is not a question of Moroz. It is a question of every honest man in my situation. In the final analysis, there is no room for petty egotism there in the Vladimir prison where people are ready for a slow death by some subtle chemical. The national renaissance is the most profound of all spiritual processes; it is rich in ideas and diversified, it can appear in thousands of forms. No one will be able to foresee them all and be in a position to weave a net wide enough to trap and contain it in its entirety. Your dams are strong and because of them you think you are out of danger. The spring tides have simply moved out of your way and have found new channels. Your turnpikes are closed. But they hold no one up, for the routes bypassed you long ago. The national renaissance is a process which has practically inexhaustible resources because national feeling lives in the soul of every human being, even of a human being who appears to be dead in spirit. For example this was clear during the debate in the Writers' Union when people from whom no one had expected it voted against the exclusion of I. Dzyuba.

You always repeat that the people who are behind bars are criminals. You close your eyes and pretend there are no problems. Well, good, you can do that for 10 more years. And then? In the Ukraine and in the whole Soviet Union the new processes of development are just beginning.

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The Ukrainian renaissance is not yet on a grand scale but don't delude yourself that it will remain as it is. In an era when all men are able to write, when there are 800,000 students in the Ukraine alone, when all have radios, every important event becomes a mass event. Don't you understand that you will have to deal with mass social trends in a very short time? The new processes have just begun and your repressions are no longer effective. What now?

There is only one solution: refrain from the obsolete policy of repression and seek new forms of cooperation with the new social-political manifestations which have become anchored once and for all in our reality. This is the real situation. It came without asking permission and created facts which demand a new approach. For people who are called upon to concern themselves with affairs of state there is food for thought here. But you are playing with boomerangs. . . .

There will be a trial. Well, we will fight. Precisely at this moment when one of the accused has written a recantation and another has become an 'interpreter', it is necessary that somebody should give an example of firmness and remove at one stroke this depressing impression which was created when some people surrendered their political positions. This is my fate. . . . It is a difficult task. It is not easy for anybody to stay behind bars. But it is even more difficult to be ashamed of oneself. That is why we will fight!

There will be a trial and everything will start from the beginning again—new protests and signatures, new materials for the press and radio of the whole world. Interest in what Moroz has written will grow ten-fold. In a word, more oil will be poured on the flames which you wanted to extinguish.

Yes, that is subversive activity. But I am not guilty: I did not put Moroz behind bars, and I did not throw the boomerang.

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Letters to the Editor

Sir,

As a scholar just lately come to a consideration of Soviet demography, I read with some interest Roman Szporluk's 'The Nations of the USSR in 1970' (*Survey*, Vol. 18, No. 4 [81], 1971). It seems to me that he is saying that the Russians are guilty of nationalism bordering on racism. His view is so common in the West that earlier this year I felt I had to question the Soviet demographer V. I. Perevedentsev about an article appearing in *Literaturnaya gazeta* over his name urging early marriages as a means of increasing the birthrate. This article, together with my letter, the abstract of it printed in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, and Perevedentsev's polite if slightly condescending reply, will be published in *Soviet Sociology*, along with the article by A. Kvasha mentioned by Szporluk (p. 68, footnote 2).[1] I was greatly impressed by the fact that neither Perevedentsev nor the editors of *Literaturnaya gazeta* took up the charge of racism, either in connexion with Central Asians or as concerns American blacks' reactions to white efforts to get them to accept birth control. (In my letter I said that I thought we projected our problems onto other cultural situations.) Instead Perevedentsev chose to remind me that a number of factors are involved in Soviet demographic policy, an answer I choose to see not as an insult to my intelligence but as an indication of the complexity of the issues. In turn, I think that much of Szporluk's energy is expended in the wrong direction. If a social scientist cannot have compassion for his subject matter, then he ought at least to cultivate a degree of sophistication. Several of the statements on page 69 of his article strike me as particularly simple-minded.

For instance, it is indeed interesting that D. I. Valentei, publishing in 1967, 'proposed a policy of birth control for the Asian parts of the Soviet Union and a policy encouraging population growth in the European areas' (p. 69). But if he did so for nationalistic or racist reasons, he was specifically denying such intent in a comment published in *Literaturnaya gazeta* a few weeks before Perevedentsev's reply to me. In fact, Valentei's comment was so close to the question I put ('Aren't the Central Asians having enough babies?') that I thought this the only answer I was to get.[2] If I grant the accuracy of Szporluk's handling of sources, then I must assume either that his interpretation differs from mine, or that he could not conceive of Valentei's being able to change his mind on reflection or of having meant something other than the inferiority of Central Asians.

[1] V. I. Perevedentsev's 'Pora zhenitsya, pora vykhodit zamuzh', appeared in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (21 April 1971) and caused considerable comment from Soviet readers. His reply to me appeared 1 September 1971. Translation of these items and the Kvasha article is scheduled for *Soviet Sociology*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (1972).

[2] D. I. Valentei's response to an American reader was published 11 August 1971.

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An American organization, The Population Council, in 1970 distributed for the benefit of its supporters and interested scholars a summary of Soviet views on population and family planning, including a paper by B. Z. Urlanis that contained the following paragraph:

> As a result of all these factors [summarized] birth control is in fact now practised almost throughout the whole of the Soviet Union; this means a responsible attitude on the part of parents to the formation of their family. Only in the Central Asian Republics, in the Azerbaidzhani Soviet Socialist Republic, and in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, there is yet no widespread birth control *because of ethnic factors.* [Emphasis mine.] [3]

Urlanis was speaking as a participant in an international conference in 1967, and Valentei was presumably writing for his Soviet students and colleagues, but is it possible that both are in agreement? Might it not be desirable to encourage birth control if cultural and service facilities (primarily kindergartens) fail to keep pace with demand? Might population expansion not be encouraged in areas in which the Soviet theoreticians feel there is a labour shortage? Whether there are not better and simpler and potentially less explosive ways of handling these problems is, of course, another matter, and one to which I wish Szporluk had addressed himself. The very article by Kvasha he cites in such an offhand way shows that although the Central Asian birthrate is higher than the Russian, it too has begun to decline, a decline so marked between one year and the next as to lead the untrained observer to suppose that if the trend continued, the Central Asians might have as much to complain of as the Russians (or in point of population, as little). Since I am uncomfortable when handling statistics, I would like to point out that a fair sampling of the literature on the issues involved (including some of the articles cited by Szporluk) has been translated in *Soviet Sociology* and *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology*.

Another remark by Szporluk touches on an area of interest to me. He writes (p. 69, footnote 7): 'Even the natives of Siberia and the Urals were said to be following the returned Europeans or moving to already well populated Central Asian republics. . . . Immigration from outside, especially immigration of the Russians, was one of the reasons why the native rural populations were unable to move to the cities of their own republics.' My husband and I have on six separate occasions written about culture change in the Siberian North, and, stung by Soviet reaction to our work on Central Asia and Kazakhstan (as biased), I am always on the lookout for new materials on the fate of the small peoples of the North.[4] In this instance, Szporluk has done your readers a disservice

[3] B. Z. Urlanis, 'Marxism and Birth Control', in *Studies in Family Planning*, No. 49 (January 1970), p. 2.

[4] Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn, 'The transformation of economy and culture in the Soviet North', *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1963), pp. 1–28; 'Comments on C. Hughes' "Under Four Flags"', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 6 (1965), pp. 58–59; 'Soviet regime and native culture in Central Asia and Kazakhstan: the

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by lumping the natives of Siberia in with the Central Asians. It's true that there are only 151,000 small peoples of the North, according to the 1970 census, but what has happened to them is illustrative of the problems and the achievements of Soviet nationality policy.

To begin with, I doubt very much that the status of the small peoples of the North (still largely rural) is connected with discriminatory practices in quite such an obvious way as Szporluk implies when he writes that ' natives . . . are being refused employment in their own country ', while even unskilled Russian labourers are being brought in to develop industry (p. 91). It is true that the Soviet ethnographer Ch. M. Taksami (himself a Nivkh, one of the small peoples of the North) expressed regret that those in charge of hiring personnel had a preference for contract labour from outside rather than for hiring Nivkhi,[5] but one should remember that this entire group numbers no more than 4,400 people and still exhibits a number of perhaps culturally determined preferences in regard to occupation and residence. These preferences are of course linked to educational achievement and mastery of Russian. The sociologist V. I. Boiko [6] has published some interesting data on motives for migration among Nanai, Ulchi and Russians on the Lower Amur. His research indicates that the Nanai and Ulchi are more strongly motivated than Russians in the same area to receive an education, and to change residence, but age, sex and educational level are important factors, since social mobility decreases sharply after the age of 30. Young natives do migrate to towns for their education, but, Boiko suggests, once they receive it, they tend to return to their home villages. Whether this is because of their inability to compete in the labour market or because they recognize that life in the big city is not all that wonderful, I expect Boiko to tell us when the complete results of his study are published at the end of this year or in 1973. It is worth noting that among the small peoples of Siberia, the native intelligentsia is composed largely of teachers, physicians and various types of cultural workers. Siberia and the North could not have been developed or maintained now from that labour reserve, even assuming such a policy were desirable. The direction of Soviet nationality policy in Siberia and the North is a subject of some discussion and controversy among Soviet

major peoples ', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 8 (1967), pp. 147–208 (with comments by Soviet and Western scholars); E. Dunn, ' Educating the small peoples of the Soviet North: the limits of culture change ', *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. V, No. 1 (1968), pp. 1–31; E. Dunn, ' Education and the native intelligentsia in the Soviet North: further thoughts on the limits of culture change ', *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1970), pp. 112–22. Still in press: Stephen P. Dunn and Ethel Dunn, ' The peoples of Siberia and the Far East ', in *The Russian Impact on Asia*, edited by Wayne Vucinich (planned for Stanford University Press); ' Siberian Cultures ', new edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

5 Ch. M. Taksami, *Nivkhi* (Leningrad, 1967), p. 144.

6 V. I. Boiko, ' Direction and motivations of potential migration of the peoples of the Lower Amur ', *Soviet Sociology*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1971), pp. 567–78.

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scholars. Perhaps it is time for Sovietologists in the West to stop stoking their boilers with the deadwood of Russification and start discussing seriously whether Sovietization is the same phenomenon or quite new. Resolution of this question does have some relevance to the status of Eskimos and Indians in the Western world.

Yours faithfully,

Ethel Dunn

Roman Szporluk replies:

Sir,

I am grateful to Mrs Ethel Dunn for her interest in my article, and I regret that it has not met with her approval. First of all, I should explain that when I spoke about the natives of Siberia and the Urals moving to Europe or to Central Asia, I was not thinking about the 'natives' as they appear to be understood by anthropologists, i.e. the small aborigine peoples, but simply all those people who are Siberian by birth. In my usage this category includes primarily Russians (but also Ukrainians, Belorussians, etc.) who have been leaving the areas of their birth in the East for Europe or Central Asia. While I admit my guilt in this respect, I do not think I have done the readers of *Survey* the disservice of which Mrs Dunn finds me guilty. When I spoke about 'natives . . . being refused employment in their own country', I was referring to the Central Asians, not the small nationalities of the Soviet North. I read Mrs Dunn's comments about the Nivkhi, Nanai and Ulchi with interest and compassion, but there is absolutely nothing about them in my own article.

I am sorry if Mrs Dunn has the impression that I say 'the Russians' are guilty of nationalism bordering on racism. To say this would be as absurd as to attribute anti-black sentiments to all whites. I note that Mrs Dunn accepts at its face value Dr Valentei's denial that his views are nationalistic or racist. Does she apply equally severe and rigorous standards in determining whether an American politician is a racist? Or whether a diplomat or an academic expelled from a foreign country is a spy? ('Reached at his home at N, Professor X denied that he was an agent of the CIA.')

It would be possible for me to accept the view that the policy encouraging birth control among the Central Asians lacks national or ethnic significance, even though it accompanies the advocacy of population expansion in Europe, were it not for other Soviet developments, namely the immigration of Russians to non-Russian areas with high birth rates and rural over-population. It can always be argued that people go where things are better and that the Russians are no exception. However, where things are better, and better for whom, depends on various circumstances beyond the control of the individual, such as the

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general social and political system; in the case of the USSR, also on the official nationality policies. If Mrs Dunn feels that my article betrays an anti-Russian bias, I wonder what she will make of statements by a Soviet author (a Russian by nationality, I believe) whom both she and I appear to regard as an authority. My charge that natives are being refused jobs in the non-Russian republics while Russians, including unskilled labourers, are being brought in, is in fact a paraphrase from an article written in 1968 by Viktor Perevedentsev. There are two points I wish to make before quoting from Perevedentsev. First, it is evident from his text that official and authoritative Soviet newspapers have been discouraging the out-migration of non-Russian rural youth to neighbouring towns (all examples cited by Perevedentsev refer to non-Russian areas, which, unlike the Russian areas, are overpopulated). Secondly, the Tadzhiks and Uzbeks are in fact seeking employment in industry; but, if Perevedentsev is to be believed, are passed over in favour of recently arrived Russian applicants. This should take care of the argument sometimes advanced in the West that the Turkic and other non-Slavic peoples are reluctant to leave their villages. Here is Perevedentsev (the interview he describes was conducted in Russian in the capital of Tadzhikistan and the Tadzhik woman was speaking in what to her was a foreign language):

> Several years ago in a textile complex in Dushanbe I had a chance to witness the hiring of new workers. Here are typical cases. *First.* A young girl enters, one apparently from out of town. Timidly she asks the inspector of the personnel department: 'Is there any job for me?' 'And what are you?' 'A weaver (spinner, speed frame worker).' 'Which grade?' 'Fourth (third, fifth).' 'Where do you live?' 'I came from Ivanovo (Shuia, Kalinin, Kamyshin).' 'Do you need a dormitory?' 'Yes.' 'Here is your pass. Get settled. Come tomorrow morning. We will give you a place at the loom.'
>
> *Second.* A Tadzhik or Uzbek woman comes in. 'And what are you? (*A vy kto*?)' 'So-and-so' (she gives her last name). 'No, I mean by speciality.' (Bewilderment, sudden embarrassment.) 'Well, what can you do?' (It turns out that she has no speciality.) 'Where do you live?' (A Dushanbe street is named.) 'How old are you?' 'Twenty.' 'Family, child?' 'Yes.'
>
> Now imagine yourself in the place of the employee of the personnel department or the manager of the enterprise. Which one is more suitable for you? The trained, qualified worker or the one who still has to be taught everything? That is why more than half of the workers at the large plant complex are Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars. The Russian women-workers are mainly from the old textile centres. In most cases they came because in Ivanovo, Shuia, Kamyshin, it is not so easy to establish a family.
>
> It may seem that all this bears no direct relation to the young people's departure from the Russian village. It does. If the weaver from Ivanovo turns up in Dushanbe or Tashkent then her place will

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be taken by a young girl from the very same Russian village, from her *oblast* or the neighbouring one. . . .

In order that more young people remain in the villages of Kostroma, Vologda or Tomsk *oblasti*, it becomes necessary for more young people to leave the villages of the Ukraine and Moldavia, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. I do not think that the Southerners need necessarily go to Siberia or the Far East. It would be fine if they were going more actively even to their own towns. In order to keep young people from leaving certain places it is necessary for others to move from their places. This is a remarkably simple idea. Nevertheless, how often do we find ourselves reading about the 'success' of a district school and Komsomol organization—they succeeded, you see, in getting the entire graduating class in Chernovtsy *oblast* or in Georgia or in Fergana (I am naming places with the highest surplus of workers) to remain on its native *kolkhoz*. But after all this means that in the city the places of these patriots . . . will be taken by the *kolkhoz* or *sovkhoz* youth from the very same depopulated villages of Central Russia or Siberia. . . .

. . . *Selskaya zhizn* has published a long and interesting article in which the author notes with satisfaction that in Georgia young people are no longer seeking to leave the villages. On the contrary. Another specialized publication, *Uchitelskaya gazeta*, sounds the alarm: the graduates of schools in Zaporozhe *oblast* are leaving for the city. . . . On page 103 [of *Trudovye resursy SSSR*, published by the Scientific-Research Institute of Labour] I read that on the *kolkhozes* of Georgia the labour force is twice (!) as large as is needed during the period of the most intense agricultural work. The preceding page informs us that an able-bodied *kolkhoznik* in the North-West of the RSFSR worked 255 days in one year on the collective farm, but in Georgia—148 days. Is this something to rejoice at? . . .

Do we need for example to bring workers from Siberia to Central Asian hydrotechnical construction projects? From Siberia to which workers are being brought from all over the country? From the point of view of society as a whole—it is not necessary. Yet at the construction site of the Nurek Hydroelectric Station you will find workers from Bratsk and the Krasnoyarsk HES, and even from those at Mamakan and Viliyuisk. And those who have come here, as a rule, did not come on their own but were transferred. They are not only excavator and power shovel operators and other highly qualified workers, but also ordinary drivers, warehouse workers, etc. . . .[1]

Like Mrs Dunn I, too, am 'uncomfortable when handling statistics', but, unlike her, I ventured into the unfamiliar field by including various statistical tables in my article. Let me take this opportunity to correct and apologize for a few errors I noticed too late. While in the text I (correctly) said that the Soviet population grew between 1959 and 1970 by 15·751 per cent, in table 1 the figure reads 15·715. Also in table 1

[1] Viktor Perevedentsev, 'Chto chelovek ishchet?', *Zhurnalist*, No. 4 (1968), pp. 73–74.

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the number of the Georgians and Mordvins in 1959 should be 2,692 and 1,285 (and not 2,696 and 1,289) thousand respectively. Accordingly, the Georgians increased by about 20·6 per cent (not 20·5 per cent) while the Mordvins declined by about 1·7 per cent (not 2·0 per cent).

Yours faithfully,

Roman Szporluk

Sir,

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